

21 July 2008
(Spiritual Warfare)

I love to hear Jim pray at DUMC. He is a prayer warrior and he always includes prayers for our servicemen, our firefighters, our emergency response teams and our policemen. These are the people out there protecting us, fighting real-world battles against terrorism, real-world battles against fire, against accidents and against criminal elements.

As Christians, as humans, we fight battles too. And this battle has gone on longer than any other war in history. There is spiritual warfare going on and we are all called to be soldiers of the Lord. **2 Timothy 2:3-4** says “*Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. And as Christ’s soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army.*” Christians are not an army of one. We are an army of THE one. Now, we already know the outcome of this battle (We win!). But we are still called to do battle.

In the physical world, when you join the army, you get sent to basic training where you learn the basics of soldiering. (Pretty clever, huh) After basic training, you get sent to advanced schools where you specialize in other skills such as infantry, intelligence, special ops, etc.

In the spiritual realm, when we become Christians, God trains us through his word and through the Holy Spirit. Actually, God trains us even before we sign up with him. Was there ever a moment in your life before you were a Christian that you can look back on and say “I don’t know why I ever made it through that situation”? I look at my life and I can see many situations where I can say just that. I know God was with me before I was ever with Him and He was using these situations to help train me and prepare me for the future. Does that mean He was happy I did what I did? Or that He was punishing me for something I did wrong? NO! God’s never happy when we sin and it isn’t punishment when we go through hard times. I could probably do another sharing on just these topics. But, back to God’s training.

How does God train us? It is through His word. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** says that “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God is thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” God’s word gives us wisdom and revelation. **Job 38:36** says: “*Who endowed the heart with wisdom or gave understanding to the mind.*” What did Solomon ask from God? Wisdom!

We have already been given a victory mindset over life. Nobody likes to loose. With the bible, we now have God’s word on how to be victorious. But we have to put that knowledge into action. Reading God’s word gives us the Logos word. Logos is derived from the verb legō: to count, tell, say, or speak. The primary meaning of logos is: something said; by implication a subject, topic of discourse, or reasoning. But to take the logos word and apply it is to have rhema knowledge. It’s revelation. You may be able to quote Matthew 28:16-20 about the Great Commission given to us by Jesus. But if you don’t go out follow his commission, you only have the logos word and not the rhema word.

I shared last month about speaking God's word. Do you realize that is only offensive weapon given to us in God's word? We already know it is sharper than any two-edged sword. But God's word also says in **James 5:16** that "*The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*"

Even though God's word is an offensive weapon, we can also use it for defense as well when the enemy tries to attack us. When Jesus was tempted, He didn't run. He just kept speaking the word. (Luke 4) "*The scriptures say, 'People need more than bread for their life'*". "*The scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God: Serve only Him'*".

And don't think that the devil doesn't know how powerful God's word is. That's what he was using when he tried to tempt Jesus. "*Doesn't it say 'He orders his angels to protect and guard you. And they will hold you with their hands to keep you from striking your foot on a stone.'*" And Jesus answered him with another scripture: "*The scriptures say, 'Do not test the Lord your God'*". Satan is a liar. The father of lies and his only power is to deceive. That's why it is so important that we know, that we understand and that we use and speak God's word.

We need to put on God's armor. **Ephesians 6:10-18** says: "*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up*

the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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 saints.”

Let's look at that chapter. It doesn't to keep putting it on. It says put on the full armor of God. We need to be on guard at all times. It says to have the belt of truth bucked around your waist. The belt is what keeps everything together (like Batman's utility belt). Lies will cause the rest of the armor to fall, to fail. And did you see any armor mentioned for your backside? Nope! That means we need to stand up to the enemy. When we turn and run, we are leaving ourselves open. We've already been told that we win! We have nothing to fear! Did it say that the shield of faith would protect us against SOME of the flaming arrows? NO! It said ALL of the arrows of the evil one. Remember that through Jesus' blood, we have authority over everything on this earth. That includes the devil! **Luke 10:19** says: *“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”* And **Romans 8:37** says: *“That we are more than conquerors”*. Learn God's word and act on it. Get that rhema word into your heart. Don't miss out on learning God's word. For **Hosea 4:6** says: *“my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge”*.

Let's learn God's word and exercise our authority. You got something to say to the devil? Write it on the bottom of your shoe because that where he can read it when we trample on him.

Smith Wigglesworth was a British evangelist and traveled to many countries to share God's word. He said one night he was wakened from his sleep by the bed moving and shaking. After praying in the spirit, he knew it was the enemy causing the shaking. Smith said to the devil “Oh, it's just you.” And went back

to sleep. I've heard another version where he told satan to put the bed back where he got it.

That's what we need to do. Show no fear. We need to recognize the only power against us is lies and deceit. Once we recognize that, we can laugh and crush our enemy under our heels. We can be those conquerors. We can be the people God created us to be and be one of the Lord's soldiers in the spiritual battle.

God – we thank you for Your Son; that through His blood we have been given all authority. And we thank you for your words; that through them we receive knowledge and revelation. And we thank you for your love, grace and mercy. Without them, we would be lost forever. But when we confess Jesus as our Lord, we are not lost! We are conquerors! We are fighting a defeated enemy! And it is Your glory that shines when we prevail.

In Jesus' name.

Amen