

It's time to engage

From thoughts on 7/29

Preached Sunday August 9, 2020

Intro

Series reminder

- For the next couple of weeks, I want to continue to speak on spiritual warfare.
- The Lord keeps placing this before me
- Last Sunday I shared *It's time to wake up* from Romans 13:11-14 - calling the church to wake up because the Lord's return is at hand.
- I asked you to pray for discernment: that God would open our eyes to the reality of his return.

Today - engage!

- This morning I want to share *It's time to engage*

- I spoke on the 5th of January (the first Sunday of 2020) about the need for spiritual warfare! Here I am again, sharing the same passage.
- An A/G pastor in Kentucky (Dana Coverstone) has been having prophetic dreams - and sharing those dreams on FaceBook. The dream he shared from Saturday 7/25 includes demons "arming themselves with weapons" and "preparing themselves for war".
- That spoke to me... in that, I believe that's exactly what's happening. In the dream he realized that these preparations (taking place all over the country) "were just like sleeper cells". He began to understand the enemy was preparing for battle like terrorist sleeper cells prepare to launch an attack.
- Without going further for this message - the truth behind his dream is what stirred this message.
- We are in a battle - but we are on the winning side!
- **Ask:** How many of us realize that we (as Christians) are in a battle right now?
- **Point** It is time for God's people to engage in the spiritual battle that's going on. Jesus has overcome - but called us into the fight!
- **Slide** This I want to give us three steps for victory in the spiritual battle we find ourselves in

Recognize the enemy

- Text - **Eph 6:12(NIV)** (12) *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.*
- That is the point of the text. It's easy to focus on the symptoms - not the illness causing them
- **Illustrate:** Fixing the roof vs. replacing the carpet.
- The source of our struggle - spiritual demonic forces. We are not fighting against protestors, a virus, politicians, etc.
- We have an enemy who is actively seeking our destruction. See **I Peter 5:8** (8) *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*
- We are being stalked by a predator - and he is looking for someone to devour. In addition, I believe we are living in the last days. He knows his time is short, and he has stepped up his attack.
- I think we forget this - or become lazy in it. Think about how things changed after 9/11 - the reality of an enemy previously unknown to the general public became very much the center of our focus
- We learned about terror threat levels. We submitted to all kinds of forfeiture of our rights and privacy
- So it should be for us now! We have an enemy, and we need to be aware!!

Resist the enemy

- Knowing we have an enemy isn't sufficient. We have to take a stand against him
- It's time we stop letting him have his way, and take a stand against him!
- See this admonition (and promise) from **James 4:7 (NIV)** *(7) Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
- We are called to resist
- We can't just acknowledge that he's out there, nor should we cower in fear - we must, instead, learn to resist him.
- Remember we have been given power over him (see part 3)
- When we do, he must flee!! He is already defeated. The battle has already been won!

Where

Personal life

- We learn to fight the enemy as we drive him back from our personal lives.
- We are children of God
- We are more than overcomer
- This is where / how we learn warfare
- If you remember **Judges 3:1-2 (NIV)** *(1) These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in*

Canaan (2) (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience):

- God didn't drive out the enemy completely so the younger ones could learn how to fight. We must learn how to gain victory by using the power of the Holy Spirit to drive the enemy from our own lives!!
- There's no point in talking about victory in the public arena if we are still serving the enemy in our private lives.
- Consider the lessons from the story of Achan. He stole some of the items that were forbidden and hid them in his tent.
- His personal defeat caused defeat for the entire nation at Ai
- We must learn to have victory in our private lives - if we are going to have victory in public!

Corporately

- Obligation to one another to fight on their behalf
- People need warriors!
- I want to share a sobering scripture with you. It's from **Ezekiel 22:30-31** *looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one. So now I will pour out my fury on them, consuming them with the fire of my anger. I will heap on their heads the full penalty for all their sins. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"*

- This verse speaks of intercession - righteous ones - standing in the gap - the broken walls - to intercede on behalf of the nation
- *I sought for someone...* God is looking right now on us, searching for someone to intercede on behalf of this nation
- *But I found no one* He didn't find anyone to do that. No one was pleading the case of the nation before the Lord
- So he poured out judgment on them - that was the consequence!
- In your families - you who have learned to fight must intercede for those who have not / can not.
- In our church - coming together to plead the blood of Jesus over the lives of others around us!
- Taking our stand against our enemy on behalf of our brothers and sisters
- For the community - putting a stop to the spread of the enemy's lies and work.

How

- At a minimum - it's simple: don't give in to the enemy's temptations. How can we get "stronger" to resist him?
- **2 Cor 10:3-4 (NIV)** (3) *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. (4) The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.*
- This is it: We are fighting a spiritual war - and we must use spiritual weaponry

Defeat with the Word

- Offensive weapon - Sword of the Spirit
- Jesus used the Word to resist the enemy
- We need to know what God has said - because he has said it - he will do it!
- Take captive every thought
- Get in the word, know the word and use the word

Prayer

- Prayer defeats the enemy
- Easy to feel like we are defeated - but we are not
- Jesus was always praying
- We must learn to wrestle in prayer! Get in and do the work of prayer
- Would you be willing to come together to pray?

in the name of Jesus

- See the passage **Phili 2:10 (NIV)** (10) *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*
- We have the power to defeat the enemy in the name of Jesus
- See the seven sons of Sceva. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?"

Coming together

- Now more than ever we need to be in the business of encouraging one another.
- Consider **Heb 10:24-25 (NIV)** (24) *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. (25) Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*
- We need each other!

Rely on these promises

- I loved the promise of the day - which also encouraged us to overcome
- **1 John 5:4-5** *For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. 5 And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*
- Through faith we overcome - faith in the person of Jesus and faith in His promises
- Let me remind you of some of the things the Lord had promised
- **Note:** We already mentioned James 4:7 - *Resist the devil and he will flee!*

Gates of hell won't prevail

- **Matthew 16:18 (NIV)** (18) *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.*
- God will move his church forward. The enemy will not defeat us!

Greater is he

- **1 John 4:4 (NIV)** (4) *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*
- Jesus in us is the power of God!

He's given us power

- **Luke 10:19 (NIV)** (19) *I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.*
- Jesus empowers us to defeat the enemy

Closing

- My intent is not to scare us, but to call us to action so that we might defeat the enemy!
- It is time to engage!
- Call us to prayer!!