

CALL to PRAYER - Pray that we Christians would engage in *The Battle*...no sideline soldiers

Intro - Four weeks ago I gave an introductory message on *Spiritual Warfare* from this very same passage. I had no idea the life changing events that were coming my way and the spiritual battle that would accompany them. As the fight has ensued, I can say that the enemy does not fight fair (he will kick you when down). Recently an MMA fighter made his profession boxing debut and when the fight wasn't going his way, he kicked his opponent in the head knocking him out (kicking in boxing). Mike Tyson fought on Friday (known for biting an opponent's ear off). I feel like I have had my ear bit off and been kicked in the head when I was only expecting to be punched. *Round 1* pummeled me and I will admit that I am shell shocked as I stand again to read from Eph. 6 and re-introduce this important subject of *Spiritual Warfare*. Today will just be an overall assessment of the topic. I have three main points. 1] *The Christian life is a battle.* 2] *God governs the battle.* 3] *We have a responsibility to engage in battle.* Let me just say from recent experience the battle is over *BELIEF* and who we are going to believe. Do we believe The Only True God who cannot lie, or do we believe Satan who is the father of lies? The devil wants us to doubt God's Word and question God's plan. This is Satan's original and only battle plan. It is a battle for belief.

Ephesian 6:10-20 - Spiritual Warfare (Part 2 / Round 2)

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A BATTLE

- Certain aspects of the Christian life are instantaneous.
 - New Birth (Ezekiel 36:26-27)
 - Faith...Justification imputed with Christ's righteousness - declared righteous
 - Consummation of salvation in glorification - 1 Cor. 15:51-52
- But large parts of living our faith are not *instantaneous*...in fact, they are *arduous*.
 - Some things are a moment but most things are a marathon. (Heb. 12:1)
 - Sanctification is the long difficult journey that begins at belief and ends in heaven
 - It is a long fight with sin & temptation. It is a battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is the daily struggle with the vagaries of life in this fallen world.
 - The Christian life of faith is a long constant fight.
- Why?
 - Acts 14:22 1 Peter 4:12 John 16:33 (Why? Because I say so.)
 - It fits the pattern
 - Israel in slavery - gets out - sent the long way around to Promise Land
 - 40 years in desert - I give you the Promise Land - now go fight for it
 - Judges 3:1-2
 - Why? To teach us warfare....and because He says so
 - God wants us to learn how to fight and to trust Him in the fight.
 - Jesus followed this pattern
 - Immediately after Jesus was baptized the Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. Mark 1:10-13
 - Heb. 5:8 after baptism comes the battle

GOD GOVERNS THE BATTLE

- Spiritual warfare is not an evenly matched fight between good & evil...light & darkness
 - It is not “*Rock'em Sock'em Robots*” God - vs - Satan
- God wants us to learn to fight but remember that He governs the fight.
 - Luke 22:31-32
 - We have to fight the *wiles of the devil* but not the *whims of the devil*
 - Our enemy must get permission to punch us.
 - Job 1:6-8, 12
- Dear Christian, in whatever battle you are facing remember that you are not abandoned.
 - God's hand guides you and governs what happens to you
 - 1 Cor. 10:13
 - The Spirit of God has led you into this wilderness and goes before you in the fight.
 - Jesus, the Son of God, has been there...and fought before you...and for you
 - The Triune God ordains the battle, is over the battle, governs the battle and is will never leave or forsake you in the battle.
 - Believe God. Abide in His Word and trust in His plan. Prov. 3:5-6

WE ARE CALLED TO ENGAGE IN THE BATTLE

- ❖ There is temptation to divorce Divine sovereignty & human responsibility
 - We should not separate what God has joined together
 - God is absolutely sovereign over the battle, and He governs the battle, but we have a responsibility to engage in the battle.
 - We shouldn't be passive when we are being punched.
 - We are called to action and to act.
 - (sovereignty doesn't erase responsibility - it establishes it)
- ❖ There are some repeated imperatives in this passage
 - “*Be strong*” (x's 2) “*Put on/take up*” (x's 7) “*Stand firm/resist*”
(x's 4)
 - We are also called to “*extinguish*” and “*be on the alert.*”
 - God's sovereignty doesn't mean sit back and do nothing
 - God's sovereignty comes with a call to action.
- ❖ Nehemiah was called to rebuild a wall. His call came with much opposition.
 - Nehemiah 4:17-18, 23
 - Clothed and strapped for battle at all times.
- ❖ The Christian life is a battle. God governs the battle, but we are called to engage in the battle.
 - We are called to action. We are not to be sideline soldiers
 - We are to be strong and courageous in Christ our Lord
 - We are strap up and suit up. Christian Kevlar
 - We are to stand firm
 - Even when our ear is bitten off or karate kicks fly in boxing match.
- ❖ 2 Tim. 4:7