

01 – A WARTIME MENTALITY

- ✓ **Most of the Body of Christ doesn't have a wartime mentality.** (And, if we're honest, I think most of us would say that we don't *want* one.) We enjoy "peace time"! But here's the inconvenient truth: We're in a spiritual battle, whether we like it or not!

Facts About the Battle

A. The Battle Isn't New

- ✓ It started *long* before we got here, and it will continue *long* after we leave. We can't stop the war – and we can't "opt out" – so we might as well learn how to fight.

B. We Can Still Have a Good Life, But It'll Be "Good Amidst the Bombs"

- ✓ As Christians, we *DO* experience the blessings of God. But no matter how much good is in our lives, the battle is never far away. Even the most "peaceful" Scriptures acknowledge that!

Psalm 23:1-2 – "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters."

- ✓ Doesn't that sound peaceful? Keep reading ...

v. 5 – "You prepare a banquet before me ..."

- ✓ Still pleasant. Right? (But finish the verse.) "You prepare a banquet before me, **in the presence of my enemies.**" (Wait, what?)
- ✓ I want you to picture that! God's laid out a "banquet of blessings" and you're sitting at the table, enjoying it all. And, while you're eating, Satan is looking on, planning his next move.
- ✓ That's not a pleasant thought, but it'll be that way as long as we're here. We can enjoy *life*, and we can enjoy *God's blessings*, but the enemy is never far away.

- ✓ Understand This: **The earth is not a playground, it's a battleground.** That's the bad news. Now, here's ...

The Good News

A. The War Has Already Been Won!

- ✓ Jesus won the victory at the Cross! And, one day, He's coming back to wrap this thing up – and the devil will be gone forever! Won't that be wonderful? (We'll get there, eventually. We just need to make it through this in-between time!)

- ✓ In this in-between time, we'll have "skirmishes" with the devil from time to time, but ...

B. We're Not Fighting in our Own Strength – (at least, we shouldn't be!)

Eph. 6:10 – "Finally, my brethren, be strong **in the Lord**, and in the power of His might."

- ✓ Be strong in the Lord! Notice he doesn't say "muster up as much strength as you can". No, we're supposed to fight with His strength. That's a common theme in Scripture.

Phil. 4:13 (Amp) – "I have strength for all things in **Christ who empowers me**. I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who **infuses inner strength into me.**"

Isa. 40:31 – "They that wait upon the Lord shall **renew** their strength."

- ✓ That's a poor translation. The Hebrew says, they shall "exchange" their strength! In other words, God takes *our* puny strength and gives us *His* strength instead.
- ✓ Look at Eph. 6:10 one more time. Paul tells us to be strong in the Lord, **and in the power of His "might"**. The word "might" means "the ability to do anything". So, let's read it that way: "Be strong in the Lord, and **in the power of His ability to do anything.**"

- ✓ I'm not trusting my ability; I'm trusting His ability – and He can do anything. (It's starting to look better, isn't it?)

C. We're Not Fighting Alone

- ✓ Not only does God infuse strength into us, but He stands there and fights *with* us.

"The Lord your God will fight for you." (Deut. 1:30, 20:4; Exodus 14:14)

- ✓ God is fighting for us. The *angels* are fighting for us. And the *Body of Christ* will fight with us! (That's one of the reasons God gives us a church family!) We're definitely not alone in this battle!

Things That Put Us at a Disadvantage in the Fight:

- 1.) **Ignorance** – We can't afford to be ignorant of: (several things)

- a.) **The Enemy** – We need to have an accurate picture of the devil. We don't want to overestimate *or* underestimate him.

- ✓ The old hymn, "A Mighty Fortress" *over*-estimates him. ("His craft and power are great. And armed with cruel hate. On earth is not his equal.")

- ✓ On earth is not his equal? Are you kidding? Have you *met* the Holy Ghost? (1 Jn. 4:4.) **If you over-estimate the enemy, you'll shrink back from the fight.** ("Ohhhh! I could never defeat *him*!")

- ✓ On the other hand, we can *under*-estimate him. We can think, "Oh, don't pay *him* any attention! He's no threat at all!" If we have that mindset, **we won't be on guard as the Bible tells us to** (1 Peter 5:8). Satan is defeated, but he's no pushover.

- b.) **Satan's Strategies**

2 Cor. 2:11 – "... lest Satan should get an advantage over us. For we are not ignorant of his schemes (plans, strategies)."

- ✓ I pointed out, in our last series, that every time Paul says, "Don't be ignorant", those wind up being the areas where the Church is the *most* ignorant. The devil has strategies that we can't afford to be ignorant of.

- c.) **Our Authority** – If we're ignorant of our authority and our weaponry, we'll be just as helpless as if we didn't have them. The second thing that will put us at a disadvantage is ...

- 2.) **Disobedience** – You can't walk in willful disobedience and exercise authority over the devil.

- ✓ Sometimes people misquote James 4:7. They think it says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you". (The Bible doesn't say that anywhere! Read it closely.)

James 4:7 – "Submit yourselves therefore to God. (**THEN ...**) Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (He only flees once you're submitted.)

- 3.) **Spiritual Apathy** – This might be our *biggest* downfall.

1 Peter 5:8-9 – "Be sober, be vigilant (**deny yourself, be watchful, alert, attentive, focused**)."

I'm not sure that describes us. A lot of us have been oblivious to the battle we're in.

Romans 13:12 – "And that, knowing the time, that now **it is high time to awake out of sleep**: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

- ✓ The Amplified says, "Do this, knowing that **this is a critical time**." It is! The apostle John said, "Children, it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18 Amp.) If it was the last *hour*, *back then* ... we must be in the last few *seconds* of the Church Age.

- ✓ The devil is making one last play for the souls of men. The darkness has never been "darker". Deception has never been stronger. Paul said in the last days perilous times would come. We're there! We need to be at the top of our game, spiritually speaking.

Seeing Accurately

- ✓ Earlier I said that an inaccurate picture of the devil will put you at a disadvantage. Well, it's just as important to see *God* and *yourself* accurately.
- 1. You Need to See God Accurately –
 - ✓ God is not distant! And He's for you, not against you! (Ps. 118:6, Ps. 56:9, Ro. 8:31). Build that into your spirit!
- 2. You Need to See Yourself Accurately –
 - a.) You're Not Who You Used to Be – (2 Cor. 5:17, Ro. 8:1)
 - ✓ Let go of your baggage. Guilt and feelings of inferiority will cripple you, in the battle.
 - b.) You Need to Understand Who You Are
 - ✓ David is a great example here. (Read the story. Notice how he saw himself, and how he saw Goliath, as he approached the battle!)

Romans 8:37 – “In all these things we **are** more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

- ✓ It didn't say you're “trying to be”. Or “You might be someday”. You're already a conqueror. You already have everything you need to win. *You have His Word, His Blood, His Name, His Spirit, His power, His authority, His armor, His weapons, His angels ... You have access to the Throne of Grace, and your Commander-in-Chief!* counting on us! (We're the ones He chose to be here at the very end)
- ✓ There's no *reason* that you can't enjoy the victory Jesus purchased for you! **You're not fighting for victory. You're fighting from a place of victory.** Jesus won the war for you. You're just enforcing Satan's defeat.