

10/01/23 Message

Part of Prayers for Victory (2023)

September 30, 2023

Message: Ready for Battle

Series: Prayers for Victory

Recap: This is our first message in the series Prayers for Victory. In this series you'll be challenged to be equipped and ready for the battles you'll face in life. More than that, you'll be encouraged to shape your prayers knowing the battle is approaching... even before the battle rages!

Introduction

It's time to shout to Jesus - GIVE ME VICTORY

You've either just come out of a battle, you're smack in the middle of a battle, or you're about to face the battle head on.

Battles are real! Battles are scary! Battles are exhausting! The enemy is after you. He's in a battle for your mind, your spirit, and your life!

—Pastor Chad

In Ephesians, Paul spells out not just how to fight the battle, but how to win the battle!

Prepare for the Battle

Ephesians 6:10-18 (MSG)

10 And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong.

11 So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way.

12 This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.

13 Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet.

14 Truth, righteousness,

15 peace,

16 faith,

17 and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon.

18 In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NLT)

10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.

12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

For some believers, I think this is what happens. You come to church, you're broken, your life is in shambles, or maybe you just realize you need Jesus - so you give your life to Christ. All of a sudden you're filled with this magical force, the Holy Spirit of God.

You feel warm and fuzzy... your heart might even flood with emotion. It feels like everything is finally right in the world. But here's what's happening behind the scenes. You just got Satan's attention.

See, he didn't pay much attention to you before because he had you... you weren't living for Jesus – so everything you did whether you intended to or not, was for the enemy. But now, you're trying to change your life. Now, you're breaking free from the chains he had you in – and now you're becoming a new creation. Satan is ticked off!

He was watching you from a distance, but now – he's in your face. Now, he's throwing obstacles in your path. Now, he's trying his best to get you to change directions... all he has to do is get you to see that this new creation thing was a mistake. Jesus isn't who He said He was... the Holy Spirit really doesn't have the power to make you brand new. He wants you to doubt and lose faith.

Recognize Your Enemies

In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul says our enemies are:

- the WORLD (those who are dead because of their disobedience and live in sin)
- the FLESH (passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature)
- the DEVIL (the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God)

Collaboratively, the world, our flesh, and the devil are our enemy! In Ephesians 6 Paul says the enemy is out to get you, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power!

- You're strong when you put on ALL of God's armor!
- The enemy wins when he crushes our SPIRIT

A disarmed, discouraged believer who has fallen to the dust of defeat, suffocated by guilt and shame, is not a threat to the enemy. The enemy uses extreme tactics, specifically designed to separate you from God, and separate you from the love of family and friends.

—Pastor Chad

Paul says put on the whole armor of God – all of it!

The Armor of God

There are six pieces of armor – the first three are to be worn at all times and the other three are to be put on when needed.

Worn at all times:

- Belt of TRUTH
- Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS
- Shoes of PEACE

Put on when needed:

- Shield of FAITH
- Helmet of SALVATION
- Sword of the SPIRIT

But that's only part of the equation. You see, I can put a soldier through basic training. I can provide all the protective equipment and armor in the world. But there's another component, and without it, a soldier is weakened and vulnerable to defeat.

God wants us to be disciplined warriors. I want you to notice there is an "s" at the end of the word "warrior" – warriors! In the military, the word Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force all have one thing in common – one person can't make up any of those organizations all by themselves.

God doesn't want a disciplined warrior – He wants disciplined warriors! You can't be in God's Army all by yourself. When you are alone, you are weak and vulnerable.

A Secret Weapon

- The silent hero in the fight is the ARMOR BEARER

Sometimes the armor bearer would carry the armor for someone; sometimes they carry additional weapons; sometimes the enemy is wounded but not dead, the armor bearer will finish the job and kill them.

Abimelech (Judges 9:54), Saul (1 Samuel 16:12), Jonathan (1 Samuel 14:6-17), and Joab (2 Samuel 18:15) all had armor bearers.

1 Samuel 14:7

“Do what you think is best,” the armor bearer replied. “I’m with you completely, whatever you decide.”

1 Samuel 16:21

So David went to Saul and began serving him. Saul loved David very much, and David became his armor bearer.

1 Samuel 31:5

When his armor bearer realized that Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died beside the king.

- To win battles that we all face in life, you must have an ARMOR-BEARER

I'll guarantee you this - regardless of the spiritual battle, if you put on all the armor of God, if you have your armor-bearer, and if you surround yourself with others in the army, you'll survive any battle with the enemy that you'll ever face!

—Pastor Chad

In this series we're talking about ways to strengthen your prayer life - so prayers will lead you to victory! God wants you to be ready for battle - He wants you to win the battle!