

Spiritual Warfare Truth and Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14

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Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

A few weeks ago I started this series on spiritual warfare. Scripture has a lot to say about spiritual warfare. Much of it was given to Paul who wrote letters to churches telling them how to live life. Paul was a man who went to prison more than once because he was talking about Jesus. The warfare was real for Paul. He wrote several of the letters while he was in prison. A soldier or a guard was standing over him. He could see the belt that was 6-8 inches wide as the center piece of the armor. The breastplate which hung over the shoulders protecting both the chest and the back was attached to the belt. Many people didn't have shoes, but soldiers had shoes. They also had a shield, even those who were guarding prisoners. The soldier wore a helmet. Every soldier had a weapon: a spear or a sword.

Paul used these images more than once to talk about the armor of God. I don't want to talk about belts, breastplates, shoes, shields, swords, helmets. I want us to focus on truth, righteousness, peace, the Word, and salvation. My goal is for you to be prepared to fight the spiritual battles. But, your mission in life is not to fight spiritual battles but to live like Jesus, sharing His grace, mercy, love, and power.

Ephesians 6:14 (NLT) Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness.

Every spiritual battle is won through Jesus' righteousness. Our daily lives are filled with spiritual battles against the devil. Small and large attacks are brought against believers to keep us from following Jesus. This is the goal of the devil, to bring down Christians. We may not like to talk about it or think about it, but there is a battle taking place for the health of your soul. Your soul is tender and easily damaged by sin and its power.

As Christians give into temptations the devil rejoices. As Christians allow old sinful behaviors to re-enter our lives the devil pushes forward with greater temptations. Your spiritual battles might be big issues with big consequences. The devil will attack us with financial troubles, or health issues, or family problems. They might be small seemingly insignificant moments without any apparent troubles. The devil will attack us with things we fear, with things that make us angry, with things that make us feel good, or thoughts that we're unworthy.

But all of us are facing spiritual battles that we can't fight on our own. God has provided for us armor to wear each day, throughout the entire day. When we don't wear God's armor we become more vulnerable to the spiritual attacks. If we don't put on all of God's armor we are leaving a portion of our lives open to attack.

We must wear the truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word. We wear them just like we wear our clothing. Clothing protects our bodies from the elements. Clothing makes a statement about who we are. We intentionally put on our clothes. We want to look a particular way. We want to send a message to ourselves and to others. We also put on the truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word.

All spiritual battles are won because the devil has already been defeated. The devil is a spiritual being and no more. He is not God, his authority is limited, his power is limited, and his reign is limited. He can go no further than God allows. He cannot do more than God permits. He will face judgment and punishment one day. That judgment is eternal damnation.

An enemy that is defeated already is desperate and will do desperate things. He will not succeed forever, but will eventually be crushed. He will not be active forever, but will be imprisoned in hell. He will not overcome those who wear God's armor. He may battle, fight, attack, trick, deceive, tempt, and discourage. But his eternal home has been assigned. He will burn in the pit of burning sulfur forever.

We must be aware of this danger. It is present everyday. It is cunning and shrewd. It is manipulative and controlling. But the devil is defeated and will lose every battle when face to face with a believer wearing the armor of God.

Romans 3:21–22 (NLT) But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

Somehow we keep wearing the armor of our goodness to fight the spirit battles. Some will say that righteousness is doing good things. I've heard it since I was a child that to be righteous a person needed to do all the right things. That's wrong. People should do good things, the right thing. Christians are empowered to do good works, to do what is right.

Have you heard people say that when they meet Saint Peter at the pearly gates of heaven they know what they will share a long list of good deeds: helping others, giving to the poor, visiting the elderly, taking care of their parents. For them, this response is their righteousness. They believe their righteousness has helped them get into heaven.

But, that's not how a person gets into heaven. No one can earn their way into heaven. No one can love their good works and get into heaven. No one can earn their way into heaven or righteousness in this life.

Righteousness is being in a right relationship with God, your creator, life giver, savior, and judge. Being in a right relationship only happens because Jesus lived, died, and rose from the dead. He became our sin, after living a life of complete faith in God the Father. He rose from the dead giving us life today and forever. Faith in Jesus makes us right with God. Jesus makes us a child of God. Jesus gives us all the authority and power of God through the Holy Spirit.

Righteousness that depends on us is an empty spiritual battle. I say this because you will fight and fight and fight and never be victorious. I know this from experience. I've fought too many battles on my own and lost. I've faced temptations on my own and lost. I've lived in fear and been paralyzed. I've felt the sting of stupid sin.

We fight the spiritual battles with truth and righteousness. The truth is Jesus. Jesus the Son of God; Jesus who died as your sin; Jesus who rose to life giving us eternal life; Jesus who makes us God's child; and Jesus who gives us all of God's power and authority.

Jesus is the truth we need to wear every day, all day. Everything hangs on the truth. Not my truth in how I see and experience the world. Not your truth in what you think about yourself or your situation. There is only one truth, He is a person and His name is Jesus.

Jesus was always in a right relationship with God. He lived every second in a right relationship with God. Jesus always trusted God: in every situation, every circumstance, every relationship, every temptation, every trial. We have the righteousness of Jesus. By calling upon Jesus to save you the righteousness of Jesus has become your righteousness. Every person who calls upon Jesus will be saved. Every person who is saved is made right with God.

John 14:6 (NLT) Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Our spiritual battles are won as we proclaim the truth. Lies and liars are all around us. The destination of every liar is the burning lake of sulfur: hell. When we believe the liar, we become part of the lie. In every spiritual battle you are being tempted with lies. In the garden of Eden Adam and Eve came face to face with the great liar, the serpent. He told them that if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that they would not die as God had promised. Death entered the world, corruption entered the world, disease entered the world because they believed the lie and not the truth.

We need to proclaim the truth. We need to speak the truth in our minds. We need to speak the truth in our spirit. We need to speak the truth aloud. First, proclaim Jesus as God's Son. Jesus existed before the beginning. He was with God and is God. He is the promised one of God. He was born as a person of flesh and blood, but always remained God's son. When Jesus was baptized, when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain top, the Father said “this is my Son, I am pleased with Him.” In the battle say, I proclaim Jesus as the Son of God.

Second, proclaim Jesus as only one who is completely faithful to God the Father. From the start of His ministry Jesus was tempted but did not sin. Throughout His ministry Jesus was tempted but did not sin. When faced with death by crucifixion Jesus was tempted but did not sin. His sinless life allowed Jesus to be the only person to be our sacrifice for sin. Every desire of God, Jesus fulfilled. All the plans of God, Jesus completed. Each promise of God, Jesus made a reality. In the battle say, I proclaim Jesus never sinned.

Third, proclaim Jesus' death as the penalty for your sin so you don't have to pay it. You are forgiven. Your sin has been removed. On the day of judgment Jesus will say to the accuser “this one is mine”. Sin no longer has power over you. Temptations no longer need to defeat you. You are free of the burden of your sin. You are free of the power of sin. Your conscience, your mind, your spirit, your soul, your body is free from sin. You have been made clean. You have been washed by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. In the battle say, I proclaim Jesus has set me free.

Fourth, proclaim Jesus' resurrection as the only power and authority for your life. There is no power like the power to raise the dead. There is no authority like the authority to call the dead to life. Jesus has that power and authority. When Jesus took His breath in the tomb that power and authority was revealed. When Jesus sat up in the tomb that power and authority was revealed. When Jesus walked out of the tomb that power and authority was revealed. Jesus gives that power and authority to every person who believes in Him. Selfish desires and attitudes don't have control over you. Temptations don't have control over you. Diseases, illnesses, afflictions don't have control over you. No person or

institution has control over you. In the battle say, I proclaim Jesus is the only power and authority I need.

Fifth, proclaim Jesus as your brother and you are a child of God. Jesus spoke to the crowds in front of His mother and His siblings. He said that all who believe in Him are His brothers and sisters. You are a child of God. You are given all the blessings of being a child of God. You are the recipient of all God's promises. Your Father is Lord of life and death. Your Father is the creator of the heaven's and the earth. Your Father is King who is sitting upon the throne. In the battle say, I proclaim Jesus as my brother

Philippians 3:9 (NLT) I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

Each morning as you get dressed remind yourself that you are in a right relationship with Jesus. We need to wear God's armor throughout our day. We need to proclaim the truth when we get dressed. With each article of clothing proclaim Jesus as the truth. As you put on another article of clothing proclaim the righteousness of Jesus over your life. You will be equipped to fight the spiritual battles of the day. The flaming arrows of the enemy will come against you. You will feel the attack of your unworthiness in the kingdom of God. But, you are God's child. The attack concerning your purpose in life will happen. But, you have been made clean from your sin by Jesus. Your life will feel out of control. But, you have the authority and power of God. The smallest things will feel like mountains bearing down on your shoulders. But, The Son of God is with you.

God's armor begins with truth and righteousness. People make up their own truth. People rely on their righteousness. You don't need to do either one. You have the privilege of knowing the truth, Jesus Christ. You have been filled and covered with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. There is no power or authority that can overcome Jesus. You are victorious before, during, and after the battle as you wear Jesus and His righteousness.

Even if you've been saved for decades proclaim Jesus in every situation. Don't think any situation is too small to wear the armor of God. Forget about thinking that any circumstance is too big to wear the armor of God. Stand on the truth and righteousness of Jesus.

Everyday people all around us battle for happiness, hope, and peace. They don't have the armor of God. They can't proclaim the truth and righteousness of Jesus. They don't have Jesus. You have Jesus. As you proclaim the truth people will see His authority in your life. When you proclaim the righteousness of Jesus, people become aware of His power in your life. You won't be able to do this unless you are wearing truth and righteousness. Put it on every morning. Proclaim the truth and the righteousness of Jesus all day long, in every situation, over every circumstance.

The armor of God is yours.