

1. A Disciple Is Prepared (at war)

a. Reality of our War

- i. R.A.Torrey “The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained the victory on their knees long before the battle came. Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory.”
- ii. 2 Cor 10:3-5 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”*
- iii. The battle that has been going on in the spiritual realm has been going on since Lucifer rebelled against God and took 1/3 of the angels into war against God. I am sure that God could have swept them away with a whisper, but for His intents and purposes, allowed them to continue to exist and to play a role in His great plan for the cosmos. Isaiah 14:12-15
- iv. Demons are spiritual in their nature as in “non-corporeal” beings. This means they do not have a physical body, but, they can create the illusion that they do (Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; Revelations 16:14). This means they have no physical form, just like Angels. Since they are purely spiritual, they do not have to function in our corporeal (material reality) realm. We do not have access to where they live and function, nor can we see it. However, we do experience its effects. Demons are semi-immortal beings who are thousands of years old, but, they will not live forever as we will, in eternity. There will come a time, in the final judgment, when the demons will be annihilated—destroyed (Colossians 2:15; Revelation 20:10).
- v. So, what do we do to guard ourselves from spiritual warfare? We do this by knowing our Lord. We know that He rescues us, just as He just went through a storm to cross a sea most would not dare to tread, to a place few would ever go, to meet two people who needed His help. One would reject Him and one would beg to go with Him. The community who rejected these two people also rejected Christ, and demanded His departure, as they valued pigs over people—money over eternity (Matthew 8: 28-34; John 14:6).
 1. How sad it is that as the demons cried out, “this is none of your business,” we too make such heinous proclamations to the very Lord who crossed a storm to redeem us! He, who bridged the gap of sin we could never cross, and paved the way for our salvation and sanctification. He allows us to remain in the boat with Him, even inviting us to go with Him.

vi.

b. What does it mean to be “at war”?

- i. We spoke a bit about it a few weeks ago.
- ii. 1 Jn.3:18 it states “*The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.”*
- iii. Notice it says his works not the Devil himself.
 1. Satan was defeated at the cross Col.2:15 “*Having disarmed principalities and powers He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”*
 2. The devil and his angels fate is already sealed yet God allows them to continue.
 3. But they have no power over a Christian.
 4. He works in the sons of disobedience and will continue to do so until he is bound by God

iv.

c. Are you a “dangerous disciple?”

- i. People will know you for what you are willing to die for. Would you hold onto a job to compromise a belief because you don't want to lose your security? Then your security is what matters to you, not Christ.
- ii. Grace is active, when our sweat meets Jesus blood, that is where a miracle takes place.
- iii. Within every man is a warrior, but the choice to fight is his own."
 1. A man must have a battle to fight, a great mission to his life that involves and transcends even family. He must have a cause to which he is devoted even to death – it is written into his dna.
 2. You too.
 3. God created you to be his ally, to join Him in the great battle for eternity.
 4. I read a quote that said, "I would love to have been William Wallace, leading the charge with a big sword in my hand, but I feel like someone on the back row holding a hoe. "
 - a. That is the enemy's lie, that you aren't significant, that you can't make a difference, that you aren't even armed for the battle.
 5. The true warrior is he that is in service of a purpose greater than himself, to a transcendent cause."

2. The ground upon which we fight:

- a. Our nation is on the verge of another war, at least our 12th conflict in the past 100 years. Some of these conflicts were small in scale, such as our participation in putting down the Boxer Rebellion in China or our forays into Mexico to stop Pancho Villa from terrorizing our southern towns. Others have been horrible conflagrations which claimed millions upon millions of lives. We have learned from experience as a nation that if we failed to confront evil outside our borders we will soon have to face it behind our borders
- b. Every general will tell you, you must pick the ground upon which you fight your battles very carefully. There is a scene from Gettysburg in which Gen. Lee surveys the landscape, the overlooking hills of Little and Big Round top and says, "this is good ground indeed to engage our enemy."
- c. Every leader knows the value of getting a toe hold into the terrain and using it to their advantage. Every soldier knows the value of using the terrain to protect himself against the attackers. And every general also knows that the key is to be the first on the ground so you can select your areas carefully.
- d. So it is also with us spiritually. Our enemy, Satan, has several battlegrounds that he prefers over all others. He knows that if he can in these areas, he can make us ineffective in other battles as well.
- e. **3 Common Enemies:**
 - i. *1 John 2:14-17 I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*
 - ii. Our battle is fought on three fronts; the world (love of the world), the flesh (desires of the flesh), the devil (his deceptions and temptations). The enemy studies us and stalks us by stealth, It is when he is uncovered and exposed for what he is doing that he loses his influence.
 1. Before you became a Christian, you floated down stream with the other dead fish. But now, God has put His life within you, and you will find yourself swimming against a three-fold current. Let's look at these three resistant enemies.
 - 2.
 - iii. **The Devil** – "your enemy the devil"

1. Has anyone “pushed your buttons”? (like your spouse or your kids?) A simple statement can push you over the edge. That is not Satan...that is your flesh and the devil has thrown you a lie you are believing about yourself or someone else.
2. Do we ask “where is this thought or feeling coming from?”
3. Cf. 2 Cor 2;11 “we are not unaware of His schemes.”
4. Who caused the Chaldeans to steal Job’s herds and kill his servants?
5. Who kept the poor woman bent over for 18 years before Jesus healed her? (Luk 13:16)
6. Who moved Ananias and Saphira to lie?
 - a. He is behind the scenes.
7. He is the "god of this world."
 - a. He was your spiritual father before you joined the family of God (John 8:44, Ephesians 2:2.
 - b. Jesus called the devil a thief, who came to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10).
8. He is in Rev. 12:1-5, 7-9
 - a. Phillip Yancey calls the incarnation the “Great Invasion.” It is not a silent night it is D-day.
9. The devil “exploits” your weaknesses and the weaknesses of the church.
 - a. He will lie to you and tell you “so and so doesn’t like you.”
 - b. He will whisper lies into your ears and tell you that you are not as smart or well liked as someone else. He will twist someone’s words so that it sounds like they are saying something they are not.
 - c. He will interfere with your ears.
 - i. I have had conversations with people and have said something and they have heard something entirely different. I can even ask them to repeat it back to me and they will repeat back something I never said. If I had recorded it and played it back to them they would have been surprised. Why? The devil interfered with their ears to affect their mind and emotions.

10.

iv. **The Flesh** – chapter 2 of Bubeck’s book

- 1.
2. The flesh is the traitor within. It is easier to go to the golf course than to go shopping with your spouse, it is easier to flick on the tv than to help your son with the homework, it is easier to mow the lawn than it is to meet with a friend in need. That is the flesh warring against you.
3. Your flesh is a weasel, it is a selfish dog, wanting its own way. And yet, your flesh is not you!
 - a. There is a big lie in the church that you are “just a sinner saved by grace.”
 - b. You WERE sinner, that is no longer your identity any longer. You were and ARE saved by grace.
 - c. Your sin is not the true you any longer. You are a new creation in Christ. You are a saint, a holy one, a son of God.
 - d. In your heart, there is a civil war going on. It isn’t between us and god but there is a traitor who wars against our true heart.
 - i. The real you is at war with the false self.
 - ii. If you believe that you are but a sinner, then you will collapse and give up before the battle begins.
 - iii. Your flesh is your false self And it has been crucified. You have to take it to the cross every day and point to the cross and say, “see, you are on it! You are dead!”

4. Imagine calling the auto parts store and getting a quote that some disk pads would be \$40.00. Then you go down there and they tell you that no, they are 80. What do you do? Do you say, "ah its no big deal and pay the price?" Or do you stand your ground and experience victory when they back down? This is where you discover the joy of resisting, of the battle when you finally get up the gumption to stand up and resist and experience a victory.
5. A person's addictions are the result of them rejecting their strengths.
6. The domain for this enemy's battle is your mind
 - a. The mind is the data-processing control panel for the eyes and the ears. It is the center of your appetites. All sin begins in the "heart" (Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 15:19).
 - b.

v. **The World** –

1. CS Lewis says, "Enemy occupied territory – that is what this world is."
2. The world is any system built by our collective sin, where our false selves, the flesh, has gathered to reward and destroy one another. If you take all of those people who are walking by the flesh and put them into a club, you have a microcosm of the world.
3. When the Bible speaks of the "world" in this context, it is referring to the sinful, rebellious, world system
 - a. This is the world that loves the darkness and hates the light (John 3:20), governed by the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) (-- the "prince power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2).
 - b.
4. The world is a collection of counterfeits.
 - a. Where do you get your sense of value and power from? Be honest?

3. Dereliction of Duty

- a. **Too many had hunkered down in hedgerows to await the dawn, a few had even gone to sleep. Pvt. Francis Palys of the 506th saw what was perhaps the worst dereliction of duty. He had gathered with a squad near Veirville. Hearing all sorts of noise and singing in the distance, he and his men snuck up on a farmhouse. Inside was a mixed group of Americans from several units. The paratroopers had found liquor in the cellar and were drunk!**
 - i. These men were are war, yet they didn't act like it. They were endangering their own lives and countless others who depended upon them to do their part. It is also a perfect picture of the American church when it comes to Spiritual Warfare.
 - ii. I read of a conversation between several pastors concerning spiritual warfare. One said, "don't you think we ought to be counteracting the work of the enemy" when the other said, "in the 3rd world or during a crusade...you know, where cutting edge ministry is taking place."
 1. It is as if he was saying, "nothing dangerous is happening here." "there is no enemy around" "we don't need our weapons."
 2. Some of you may remember the mess hall suicide bombing in Iraq. Hundreds of soldiers were eating at a place where they assumed it was safe. They had taken off their body armor and didn't even have their weapons with them. One of the Iraqi caterers walked in and blew himself up. Many were killed and injured. In the after action report, it was concluded that the injuries would have been much more minor had the soldiers been dressed for battle and wearing their armor.
- b. "The neglected heart will soon be a heart overrun with worldly thoughts; the neglected life will soon become a moral chaos; the church that is not jealously protected by mighty intercession and sacrificial labors will before long become the abode of every evil bird and the hiding place for unsuspected corruption. The creeping wilderness will soon take over that church that trusts in its own strength and forgets to watch and pray." A. W. Tozer

c.

4. Principles of Warfare

a. Cf 1 Peter 5:8-9

- i. The enemy will try to **destroy your lines of communication**. He will get you behind, tired, exhausted, busy, and you will neglect prayer. Your sweet communion is cut off.
- ii. The enemy will use **destructive propaganda**. (deception) Remember Tokyo Rose? Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10). “I’m such an idiot. I always do that! I’ll never amount to anything. No one ever appreciates me. You have nothing worth saying.”
 1. He said it to Jesus “If you are the Son of God...” (Luk 4:1-13)
- iii. Satan **probes your perimeter**, looking for weaknesses. He tosses you a bone, a piece of bait with a well hidden hook. He appeals to the traitor within, our flesh.
- iv. Satan will try to **intimidate you**.
 1. He knows that if you “resist the devil...” “he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)
 2. He will try to keep you from taking a stand.
 3. By striking first, he hopes to take your initiative away.
- v. Desertion – persisting to the end is one of the most challenging of tasks. The road seems endless and there are days when boredom takes over. (not unlike real soldiers “hurry up and wait.”)
- vi. Battles are rarely head on with Satan, because he is already defeated. He uses lies and subterfuge as his strategy, since he cannot win a head to head battle with people wielding the name of Jesus.

5. Thresholds

a. **Threshold of the Mind**

- b. Some of you have received and read a booklet that my wife, Jennifer, has handed out, called “A Study of the Mind.” If you haven’t received it yet, we have copies at the back that you can take home with you to do a personal study of this subject as well.
- c. This little book opens with a profound statement, “**Spiritual battles are won or lost at the threshold of the mind, not in the mind.**”
- d. Remember, I said that **the mind is not the same as the brain?**
 - i. Your brain is an organ, a bunch of cells with electrical impulses.
 - ii. Your brain is considered a part of your body, not your soul.
 - iii. Your brain is essentially a big computer, responsible for *processing* the variety of inputs it gets from the rest of your body from the environment it is in.
 - iv. This information that your brain processes must be filtered by your mind
 - v. **The mind is essentially the seat of your thoughts.**
 1. It is another word for your “heart” or your “soul.”
 - vi. Your thoughts, your emotions and your will act upon the different inputs and pieces of information
 - vii. In fact, your heart/soul is composed of your MIND, WILL and EMOTIONS.
 1. The mind is the center of your judgments.
 2. The emotions are the center of your feelings.
 3. The will is the decision making component of your being.
 4. It is informed by both the knowledge and judgments of the mind and the feelings of the emotions.
- e. **Castle Illustration**
- f. If you have ever seen a photo of any of the great castles in Europe, you find that they oftentimes were surrounded by thick walls. These walls were built to keep out invaders and conquering armies. **The weakest point of these castles of course, were the gates.** The builders would try to build chokepoints so that invading armies would have to be constricted to a narrow area where they would be the most vulnerable as they approached the gate to try to breach it.

- g. The sad thing for many of these castles is that they were seldom taken by active warfare. Many of them unknowingly **let their enemies in** where they were conquered quickly with almost not battle at all.
- h. The **entry point** of the fortification was the deciding point for every castle. If an enemy got past that point, they were free to wreak havoc on the rest of the fortification, because no matter how thick the walls, how great the army, once the enemy was inside it could do as it wished.
- i. **Threshold** – just like the fortress or a castle, the weakest point in our make up is the threshold or the entry point of our mind.
- j. **The threshold of our mind is crossed when we fix our attention upon something.**
 - i. Peep Holes:
 - 1. Most of us have peep holes in our front doors. We hear a knock and what do we do? We don't swing the door wide open in this day and age. We peek through the door hole and look to see who it is.
 - 2. Once we glance and RECOGNIZE the visitor, do we open the door or keep it closed?
 - 3. What will you choose to do today?
 - 4. What has been ruling your mind?
 - 5. You are no longer a slave to sin. God has a way for you to plug into His power and to overcome the weakness of your own will.
 - 6. Won't you set your mind on things above? Won't you fill your mind with the things of God?

6. Preparation for Battle

- a. When a person comes to Christ, everything he has a relationship with changes. He is a new creation, all things have become new. He is a citizen of heaven, he is crucified with Christ, reckoned dead to sin and alive to Christ. He is appointed to suffer with Christ.
 - i. The US Naval Academy – I received my appointment to it in 1972 for the fall of that year. However, my eyesight was too poor and I was declined. I am not sorry for that now. But as I reflect upon the academy experience (see the movie?) I am struck by how serious our nation's leaders take the development of our warriors.
 - ii. If earthly warfare requires a lifetime of preparation and study, do you not think that the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ, preparing for daily battle with an unseen enemy needs any different?
 - iii. A person will devote long hours and endless discipline to his finances if he has a goal of early retirement. He will endure hours of grueling training for a marathon race, or to be able to play at a sport he will practice.
 - 1. When he comes to serving the king in battle, will he endure the hardships?
- b. *Do not have a concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him.*--Hudson Taylor
- c. *“Our weapons are not carnal (of flesh) but mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God”.*
 - i. Prayer and the word is our weapon if used correctly the walls will come tumbling down. strongholds are fortresses built to oppose the truth of Christ and the word.
 - ii. Walls are built with false ideologies and philosophies that have taken people captive. I
 - iii. n other words it is untruth, false patterns of thinking, vain imaginations that hold people captive.
 - iv. Evolution, false spirituality, sensuality without repercussions all the works of the flesh.
 - v. Lies such as death is only a transition to a higher plane , everyone that is good is going to heaven.
 - vi. The enemies strongholds are pulled down with the word of truth
- d. Ephesians 6:12 –

- i. Speaks of a spiritual war that is taking place on earth for the heart and minds of everyone whether they know it or not.
 - ii. It is an influence from the spirit realm with deceiving spirits.
 - iii. The same spirit that can give a psychic insight by feelings and colors or thoughts can also move someone to suicide or false teaching.
 - iv. In other words what a spirit does, is not their name, it is their current activity.
 - v. While mans spirit is dead in relationship to God until he is forgiven cleansed by Christ's blood.
 - vi. He can be very much alive to spiritual experiences from other spirits who want us to believe that we are experiencing God.
 - 1. Principality = (Archai) governing authority over nations. Positions over nations
 - 2. Powers=(Gr.Dynameis) angels invested with authority and ability.
 - 3. Rulers of the darkness of this age = expresses the powers of authority and influence over the world system.
 - 4. Spiritual Hosts of wickedness= express their character and nature as an opposing army they have military organization.
 - vii. The devil will come at us at our weakest times. Look at the example of Jesus after 40 days he hungered, in other words he could have starved if he didn't eat. The Devil waited until at this time to launch his attack. When Jesus was tempted by the devil he resisted him by quoting scripture that was relevant to his situation. He destroyed the lie propagated by putting the truth next to it. We need to have a comprehensive working knowledge of scripture to be victorious.
 - viii. No one learns to fight a battle in one day so their needs to be a consistent resistance against the enemy otherwise we will fold during the main battle. It states in the Old Testament in Jeremiah, "if you can't walk well with the foot soldiers how will you run with the horsemen".
- e. In fact there are only two offensive weapons of the armor. The other one is the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. We use the offensive weapons to tear down the enemy's kingdom. Prayer is roughly equivalent to a lance, a powerful offensive weapon. It allows us to reach targets that are far away and it also allows us to effectively charge enemies looming directly in our path.
- i. *"A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms. Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared. In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in our prayers for all Christians everywhere."*
 - ii. There are two things we do to put on the armor of God. First, we declare it. Second, we wear it. When we get together in our prayer time with the Lord, we begin to ask God to put the armor on us. And then we live it out. You can put on the breastplate of righteousness, but if you are not living righteously, then you do not have a breastplate. It is not only what you say and you declare, it is what you live out.
 - iii. The armor is essentially "putting on the new self" and living it out.
 - 1. If you don't walk it out, you've not really put it on. You have to live it out. That is what putting it on is all about. It is more than just saying that you have the armor. It is living it out. You declare with your mouth to remind you that day to live out

righteousness, to live out your salvation, to walk out the things that you find in the earth. If you live them out then you are protected.

- f. There is a cosmic struggle going on in your life.
 - i. You may think that your life is ordinary and mundane, but heaven waits to see the outcome of the struggle going on for your soul.
 - ii. The late Francis Shaeffer said, in his book on Joshua, "There are no little people."
 - iii. You are part of the people of God, who stand in immanent danger from the hands of this hideous dragon, Satan, who wants to keep you out of heaven.
 - iv. If he can't succeed at that, he will do his dead-level best to make you miserable, or an embarrassment to or an unprofitable member of the kingdom of God.
 - v. Heaven looks intently at the spiritual warfare going on upon the earth, but also, in particular, in your life.
 - vi. Much is at stake in how you wage that warfare.
- g. The Devil is real. Rev. 12,
 - i. We must make certain we're in the King's army, under his command, and fighting the right foe.
 - ii. It seems a lot of so-called Christians are injuring the people of God with "friendly fire."
 - iii. There seem to be as many casualties caused by fellow Christians and in the church as from unbelievers outside the church.
 - iv. And so many are spending energy, time, and resources on futile efforts rather than engaged in the King's business.
- h. We are already reigning with him, and are more that conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8: 37).
 - i. Some of you are believers without an active church membership.
 - 1. Spiritual warfare cannot be waged alone.
 - 2. You need to be an active part of a real and local fellowship, or rather, detachment of the King's army.
 - 3. And we need you. In spiritual warfare, there is strength in numbers. And, each one of us needs to resolve to be strong in the Lord, and to be prepared to be victorious and faithful in spiritual warfare.

7. Being prepared:

- a. Don't neglect to wear your armor.
- b. Don't live like you are on the back lines.
- c. Have you suffered wounds? Do you have scars of the battle? Instead of wearing them with shame, wear them with pride. Paul did. He spoke with joyful regard to sleepless nights, stonings, beatings, shipwrecks, trials and imprisonment. He spoke of his affliction that would not leave and said, "I will boast in my weakness."
- d. Prayer:
 - i. "Hell is larger today than it was yesterday, because many of us have failed to pray." David Smithers
 - ii. "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me." Robert Murray M'Cheyne
 - iii. "The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." Samuel Chadwick
 - iv. "The true man of God is heartsick, grieved at the worldliness of the Church...grieved at the toleration of sin in the Church, grieved at the prayerlessness in the Church. He is disturbed that the corporate prayer of the Church no longer pulls down the strongholds of the devil." Leonard Ravenhill
- e. If a person or church has no purpose, direction or a united goal, they will be a disorganized army that will become victims to an enemy who has organized his forces.

- i. Are you lining up or are you doing your own thing? If you are doing your own thing, out of battle formation the enemy will “pick you off” as a straggler. Get in line! Get in formation!
8. Beeline to the cross:
 - a. Jesus paid it all for you and I – what can we do in return?
 - b. Jesus paid it all for you – will you receive his gift.
9. Anointing as preparation for the battle of ministry.
 - a. Are we on the back lines or the front lines?
 - b. Do we have a sense of security that we don’t need to daily prepare for battle?
 - i. Would you live the way you do now if you lived in Benin, where witchcraft and voodoo and demons penetrate every facet of life? Of course not!
 - ii. Would you live the way you do now if you lived in Vietnam or N.Korea where being a Christian is punishable by death? Of course not!
 - iii. You would be prepared!
 - c. What is anointing?
 - d. We do ministry here at our church, in our lives and in our country as if the devil is far off and danger is not near. We do not hear the sound of spiritual gunfire so we walk around without our armor, we never bother to wait for the anointing of God’s power to do ministry. After all, can’t we do it with a quick 5 minute prayer and our own wits?
 - i. Sure, but it will not have supernatural, life changing, world shaking effects.
 - ii. It will only be the power of man and will produce man-sized results.
 - iii. Until we connect with the supernatural power of God and learn to wait upon Him like the disciples did in the upper room and in the homes where they met, we will have a church of man instead of God.
 - iv.