

TAKE UP THY SWORD †

A newsletter with hope and encouragement from the Holy Bible

For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword... (Hebrews 4:16)

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A Fixed Fight

Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for [your enemy]... for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles... (2 Chronicles 32:7-8).

I'm not exactly a fan of boxing, and the fact that several prizefighters have admitted to "throwing a bout" in the past only strengthens my defense. For Christians especially, our adversary (the devil) has no intention of simply lying down for the count. However, no matter how much, how hard, or how long the enemy fights against us, we know that we have "the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57)! And don't forget Satan's ultimate fate:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev 20:10).

The battle begins from the day we're born, even for our salvation and deliverance. Because we are "triune beings" – made up of spirit, soul, and body – the flesh is constantly striving against the spirit in the battleground of the soul: our mind, will, and emotions. Therefore, the apostle Paul gave us these instructions:

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (Gal 5:16-17).

So not only do we have to contend with seen/unseen external opponents, we also struggle with our inner man. Unlike many confrontations in the Old Testament, we [civilians] are not required to have physical combat; "for though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh" (2 Cor 10:3). In Ephesians 6:12, we find out the reason why we need to put on the full armor of God:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

It may not feel fun or fair to be automatically drafted into the army of the Lord; but at least we know that as "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20), we already have the victory! Just remember God's Word:

- » Avenge not yourselves... for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord (Rom 12:19).
- » When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him (Isa 59:19).

» The Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you (Josh 23:10).

» Blessed be the Lord my strength which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight (Ps 144:1).

God uses each battle to increase our strength, solidify our faith, and prove our complete surrender to His will. My tests have been turned into testimonies for the sake of the Kingdom, so I can now be called an "overcomer". Let's see how David was able to succeed in his first public feat:

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David (1 Sam 17:50).

The notorious story of David and Goliath begins and ends in the 17th chapter of First Samuel. Goliath was literally a giant in the army of the Philistines, and he arrogantly instigated a one-on-one battle with any Israelite. David just happened to overhear him "defy the armies of the living God" (17:26), so he boldly asked what the prize would be for killing this tyrant. All of the other men were "dismayed, and greatly afraid" (17:11); so when David volunteered to fight Goliath, his own brothers mocked him and questioned his motives. King Saul also said that David was "but a youth" (17:33), even though he was told in 1 Sam 16:18 that he was "a mighty valiant man, and a man of war". After David described his encounter with a lion and a bear, Saul said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee" (17:37). Although Goliath had sword, spear, and shield, David came solely with a shepherd's bag with five smooth stones. Goliath went down in one throw, David cut off his head, and the men of Israel pursued the fleeing Philistines.

Whatever the obstacle, oppression, or opposition, we can always call upon "the Lord mighty in battle" (Ps 24:8)!

THUS SAITH THE LORD, "And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee..." (Jer 15:20).

PRAYER: *Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help (Ps 35:1-2).*

"... Be encouraged in the law of the Lord" (2 Chron 31:4):

Deuteronomy 3:21-22, 20:1-4; Joshua 10:24-25, 11:18-23; Psalm 25:1-5, 27:1-6, 54:4-7; Isaiah 54:14-17; Jeremiah 20:11-13; Nahum 1:2&7; Zechariah 10:4-6; Romans 8:31

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