

A spiritual battle

“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.”

(Luke 11:21-23)

1. Going through spiritual stages and battles

“These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron”. (Numbers 33:1)

The Israelites did not know that there was a difficult journey awaiting them between the red sea and the land of Canaan. The journey would be more exhausting. They had to go through the wilderness. Even after crossing the Jordan River and arriving at the land of Canaan, they had to fight many exhausting wars which awaited them. In order to possess the land of milk and honey, they had to bring destruction over their enemy.

This also applies to us. Many Christians do not realize the reality of spiritual warfare. They just imagine entering the land of Canaan, heaven. They are fascinated with the thoughts of the beautiful scenery in paradise and its holiness. However, our future is spread out with many layers of spiritual stages and processes. Much spiritual warfare is awaiting us. Our lives are surrounded by invisible enemies. It is an exhausting, painful, and tormenting process. We must get to light from darkness and the only hope is in Jesus Christ. (John 14:6)

2. One devoted to fight with evil forces

Generally, people always dream of living their lives enjoying and resting. They want comfortable lives. However, their eternal wish or hope is vanished through their sins. Our life is a battle. Our life is a competitive sanguinary struggle for survival. Our life is a continuous wrestling match. But many attempt to avoid the battle. Our fight is not ordinary. It is a fierce battle that only people with Christ can fight. The fight is with evil forces

and not even an inch of ground can be conceded. The worldly people are the sacrifices of the evil forces. It is the people of faith that can fight and triumph. (Galatians 5:24)

Jesus is looking for people who will devote themselves to fight the battles against the forces of evil. In Luke 11:23, the Lord offered us to be with Him. The Lord positively proclaimed the following. "He who is not with Me is against Me, and He who does not gather with Me, scatters." If we are to be with the Lord, we have no choice but to distinctly arm ourselves and engage in the spiritual warfare. It is our duty to wrestle and bring down the enemy. However, in most cases, many Christians prefer to be passive and complacent. The strong man represents the forces of the devil that is fully armed and guards his own dwelling. They are well prepared and their preparations are set up by way of precaution. "*When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:* (Luke 11:21) The people who can successfully fight and engage the forces of evil spirits are Christians. But currently, most Christians are helplessly defeated.

3. The start of battle

The engagement for Christians began when the Lord was here on earth. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. The Lord desires believers to be good spiritual soldiers, rather than just lay believers.

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

(2 Timothy 2:3)

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

(1 John 3:8)

Satan and his forces do not engage each other. Satan is very cunning. They give no gap or opening. Therefore, they do not divide their forces. The evil forces know that a divided kingdom will collapse and will not continue to stand "*And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?*" (Matthew 12:26). Jesus had discussed about this issue "*But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.*" (Luke 11:17).

The spiritual battle is very fierce and intense. The outcome of the battle will depend on who is more armed and who has more power "*But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils*". (Luke 11:22). When Jesus who is more powerful comes, He will eventually win and

will break the power of the devil. The power of the devil will come to an end. When we go spiritually deeper, we can come to realize that we must always arm ourselves completely in our thoughts, minds, and in our daily lives.

4. Put on the full armor of God

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:” (Ephesians 6:10-17)

When we observe the clothes that people wear, we can distinguish the type of work they are doing. For example, soldiers wear military uniforms. When people see the soldiers in uniforms, they can feel the strength as the uniform and soldier represents trust and safety. But when we observe people wearing a night gown or hospital gown, they appear to be weak and without strength. Some soldiers in special commando uniforms appear and represent more strength. People who may encounter them might become afraid and shiver. In truth, Christians must arm themselves completely as well. When they are completely armed, the evil spirits will view the strength and will shiver immediately at their presence. We Christians must have the ability and power to snatch back souls that are seized and in bondage by the evil forces.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

(Hebrews 4:12).

We are to settle our victory through the Word of God which is quick, powerful, and sharp.

5. **Gather with the Lord** (Luke 11:23, make a decision!)

We need to ask ourselves a question. “Even though my beloved Jesus grants me the opportunity to make a decision, will I continue to stay in a complacent state?” The world is governed by Satan. Although everything is under God’s plan, the evil spirits counterfeit and play the role as if they are in control. The evil spirits are the culprits that destroy, steal, and plunder. They plan and strike the Christians every day and night. Some Christians are helplessly defeated before they even know what hit them.

Within our society, people are basically well organized. They place a lot of effort to search for conventional reformation through their own efforts, such as with legislation, education, improving working conditions, and etc. However, it will all eventually end in somber death. Even though the world is under Satan’s control, we still have a hope. I truly believe the power of the devil will be ineffective once we recognize and accept the work of Jesus Christ and the power of the cross and the power of resurrection.

The Lord is more powerful than the devil and He breaks down the stronghold - this is the good news and the Gospel. Simply confessing it with your mouth and not understanding it with your heart is not enough when it comes to spiritual warfare. One must jump and engage into the battle with the Lord.

However, the Lord has clearly warned us that there will be people who will be against this. The Lord is seeking people who will engage into the flames like a fire fighter. We are challenged to make a decision whether we will engage in battle with the Lord or be against it. The choice is up to us.