

Prepared – Introduction

In the *Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis made this comment.

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight.”

Lewis was creatively referencing the existence of demonic forces in our lives and the negative impact they can hold. I’m not sure where you stand personally on the idea of demons and evil, but every Christian needs to understand what the Bible says concerning this topic and then make necessary preparations for any coming attacks from the evil one. Here’s the thing, Christians need not look outside of God’s Word to better understand the evils that exist around us. The Bible makes it clear that this world, this life here on earth, is filled with spiritual forces hell-bent on keeping people from choosing God, first, and then from preventing those who love Jesus from fulfilling God’s call on their life. The only way we can protect ourselves from these attacks is to make sure we stay put in the Word.

Every day, especially the Christ followers’ day, Satan has plans to attack. The Bible makes this fact noticeably clear. Biblical history proves this out. Consider when Satan attacked Job’s family, his crops, his livestock, his health. Or even before this, when Satan used his number one tool, deception, to coax Adam and Eve by making sin more attractive than obedience. Peter denied Jesus on three occasions because Satan encouraged him to worry about his safety and what others would think of him. But the greatest example is when Satan tempted Jesus at the beginning of His ministry. Food, fame, and glory were Satan’s tempters on this occasion. When we consider each of these examples, we discover that Satan often attacks us both mentally and physically. These spiritual attacks are often experienced in our lives with things like self-doubt, or our heads being filled with lies, or our thoughts being filled with darkness and despair. And when I think about this, I’m reminded of Peter’s warning from **1 Peter 5:8**, which says, “*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*” (ESV)

Spiritual attacks are real folks, and when we experience these attacks with frequency and with increased intensity, we must also recognize that spiritual warfare is real. War is not a singular assault but is a collection of assaults that take place in different areas and at various times. All with the strategy of destruction. Paul issued a strong warning to the church at Ephesus when he warned them about the things which we wrestle or battle with. **Read Ephesians 6:12.** “*We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*” (ESV)

Peter in the verse following his warning says, in reference to Satan, “Resist him, firm in your faith,” (**1 Peter 5:9a ESV**) Paul implores the church in Ephesus to “*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*” (**Ephesians 6:13 ESV**) Paul wants us to remember that we are not simply fighting physical foes: there are enemies we cannot see, and they cannot be fought using conventional weapons. When we are pursuing Christ and a relationship with Him that glorifies the Father, the enemy will come to kill, steal, and destroy whatever we allow, and although these moments are often disheartening and difficult, we must understand that God can use these moments to grow us and strengthen us in our faith. If we trust God’s presence and power in our lives then we will gain the ability to stand firm, as both Peter and Paul suggest.

Every day that we are on this side of heaven, we are at war. Every day could mean that we will face a new attack from Satan or from one of the other evils in this world. We cannot escape it. What then must we do in response? We must prepare for the battles by equipping ourselves with God’s armor and trusting God’s power and strength to see us through. We must also believe in the promise of God which assures us that, in the end, when the war is finally over, we win because Jesus wins!!!

Paul often used military language when describing the trials and tribulations we may face in life. Later in his letter to the church at Colossae, he used language associated with military victory to describe the victory we can find through the death of Jesus on the cross. **Read Colossians 2:13-15.** *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (ESV)*

As we investigate what Scripture states about spiritual warfare, we must always keep in mind that *we already know the outcome: Jesus has won the victory in this spiritual war, and we live in the Spirit and power of his victory.* In the power of the Spirit, we can remain confident and at peace knowing that our Lord has vanquished all our enemies. It is God, by grace through Jesus, and in the power of His Spirit that we can rest in Christ and trust God for every victory.

I close with these words from **Psalms 44:5-8.** *You are my King, O God; ordain salvation for Jacob! Through you we push down our foes; through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. For not in my bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me. But you have saved us from our foes and have put to shame those who hate us. In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever. (ESV)*