

Spiritual Warfare

Member Guide- 05/23/10



For the next two weekends, the sermon will be on the topic of Spiritual Warfare. Two mistakes that the church has made in recent years has been to either ignore this reality or to deal with it wrongly. In this week's small group study, we will discuss what it means to fight with the strength of the Lord. The lives of Joshua and Paul will provide the meat of these discussions:

Opening Questions:

Was there anything from this weekend's sermon that you found particularly helpful as it relates to your walk with Christ?

Joshua 1:1-9:

The command that Paul gives in Ephesians 6:10, to "be strong in the Lord" is a clear reference to this famous commission of Joshua. Three times in Joshua 1, Joshua is commanded to be strong and courageous. Joshua needed this admonishment for good reason- Joshua was about to embark on a military campaign that seemed beyond Israel's capabilities. He would have to trust God in the greatest challenge of his life, only a short time after his spiritual mentor had passed away.

Israel was young, the nations against them seemed more powerful, and their leader had just stepped into his role. The odds were stacked against them, but God proved Himself faithful and powerful in Canaan. God empowered Joshua and Israel to do that which He commanded them to do. God parted the Jordan, crumbled the walls of Jericho, and made the sun stand still for Joshua and Israel. God's strength was the deciding factor in these battles.

If God was going to miraculously ensure victory for Israel, why did God command Israel to do any fighting at all?

Even though Ephesians 6:10-18 makes it clear that we have a drastically different battle to wage, why do you think Paul refers to this story from Joshua?

How does Joshua's story encourage your faith?

2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10

In this passage, Paul explains his source for power in ministry. In this portion of 2 Corinthians, he is arguing against some strong and persuasive adversaries who are leading the Corinthian church astray. Paul asserts his authority, at first by bragging about his credentials, but then revealing a greater strength that comes from the Gospel.

We also get a taste for what Paul had to endure in his life, both physical and spiritual battles that he had to fight. 2 Cor 11:23-27 recount the beatings, hunger, and danger that he faced as a preacher. 2 Cor 11:28 tells of the emotional battle he had as a church planter, and 12:7-10 reveal an internal spiritual battle with Satan. It's in these last four verses that we see what kept Paul strong amidst everything he had to endure. His conclusion, that God's "power is made perfect in weakness," seems so contrary to the way humanity normally functions. And yet, this is the divine power that we see in the gospel, that "when I am weak, then I am strong."

Take a moment to list everything that Paul had to endure in his life.

How do you think Paul was able to make it through everything that he had to endure in verses 11:23-28?

How does God work through the weaknesses of His people?

Paul concludes, "when I am weak, then I am strong." How have you seen this to be true in your own life and in the lives of other believers?

Summary Questions:

Why does God choose to use imperfect human beings to carry out His mission?

What does it look like to be strong in the Lord?

What hard situations are you now facing that will require you to lean on God's strength?

Prayer:

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 and/or 1 Samuel 2:1-10.
- Praise God that He opposes the proud and gives Grace to the humble
- Pray that the Summit would boldly minister in this city in the power of God
- Pray for each other as you face personal battles