

NOT WITHOUT A FIGHT

Bits of Hope from 10-19-08

Minister Sylvia Stroy

Psalm 100; Ephesians 6:10-18

You do know that in life you are going to have to fight for some things. When we think about what's going on in our world today, everything is a fight. For instance, the question is being asked, "Who won the recent presidential debate between Senator Obama and Senator McCain?" Do you remember your first fight ever in life? Do you remember who it was and what it was about? The reason does not seem so important now. We have so many battles in life. We fight about so many trivial things. We must mature to realize what an important fight is. We should be fighting to have a better community. We should be fighting for our families and our children. We should be fighting to transform this present world into the kingdom of God.

The church is currently under attack. Christians are being persecuted. People are speaking out against us and God. There is a militant group in India that has killed 90 Christians and burned approximately 200 churches which sent other Christians running scared. Remember Jesus was persecuted but continued to do the will of God. How do we fight? Why does the kingdom suffer violence? Every time you introduce someone to Christ, the kingdom of God is advanced and the enemy is destroyed. Every time you lay hands to heal someone, the kingdom of God is advanced and the enemy is destroyed.

What are you battling over at this moment? What is causing you to worry, not eat, and not sleep? Some of the greatest battles you will fight are in the chambers of your soul. You need to know how to fight. In the text, Paul begins to tell the people of God how to fight. Paul informed them they have an enemy they have to fight and it is an ongoing battle. You have to always be ready and equipped to fight. You cannot be strengthened by refusing to go into battle. You cannot retreat. If you notice the text describes all the gear we will need in battle but there is no gear for the back. That is because you are not to turn around and retreat. You cannot give up.

Our society is into makeovers. In today's world, you can make yourself into whatever you want to be and whatever you want to look like. However, what do we do about the inside? The makeover only works on the outside. Paul tells us we are soldiers in God's army. In God's army, there is territory to be won. When you prepare in the morning to go out and face the world, prepare for the battle of life. Paul says first you must be strong to prepare for the battle of life. He said, "Stand firm," three times in the passage. That means do not waver in what God has instructed you to do. Stand firm in the full armor of God. If you step out without the breastplate of righteousness, your heart is not protected. Dress your feet with peace. When Christ came, he brought a word of peace and salvation. God has positioned us strategically so that we can establish the will of God wherever He has placed us. We are to have a belt of truth. Truth holds everything together but prayer brings up the rear. The only

weapon you can really fight with is the Word of God so you must know the Word of God. You need to know what God said.

Our mission in this battle of life is to be strong in Lord and His power. Whatever God has assigned to you don't go about it unarmed. We are fighting the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. We are fighting against principalities. When we stand in faith, speak truth, dressed in the full armor of God, we can stand firm. You wonder why the same battle keeps coming back. You went through it without a piece of your armor. God has given you the authority and the armor to fight.

God has also given you worship. In **Psalm 100**, it encourages and challenges us to worship God in His fullness. Whatever wilderness you are currently in, remember how God has seen you through in the past. He can do it again. The text commands us to shout for joy. How can we not worship God? To worship God is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God. **Ezekiel 44** We must be careful that we do not become so busy with life and duties that we forget to worship God. Celebration and joy brings us strength. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

In spiritual warfare every Christian must be involved. As a Christian, you are fighting against an enemy you cannot see. In the end, we win. At the end of the battle is victory. When you go into the battle prepared and fully armed, you can go in knowing you will win. Be quick to praise God despite what it looks like. When you win the battle, be careful to know that you didn't win it by yourself. Be pervasive in prayer. Your fight is all in the glory of God. It is about taking back territory for Him. Decide today that the enemy cannot have one more thing from your life: not your children, family, finances, health, faith, joy, or your peace. The battle is not yours; it's the Lord's.

Peace