

Brave, Strong, Known and Loved— Who’s Got Your Back?- January 23rd and 26th, 2020

Scripture: Ephesians 6.18-20

Ephesians 6.10-20 (NIV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Isaiah 54.16 (NIV)

“See, it is I who created the blacksmith
who fans the coals into flame
and forges a weapon fit for its work.

Isaiah 54.17 (NIV)

“...no weapon forged against you will prevail...”

Read and Discuss

Introduction

This week, we wrapped up our series, Brave, Strong, Known, and Loved. We have been reminded that as children of God, we were created to be Brave, Strong, Known and Loved. Paul wrote in the letter to the Ephesians that we have certain attire that we can put on in order to live out our identity in Christ. We heard about wearing the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, a shield of faith, a helmet of salvation and a sword which is the word of God. After this instruction of how to “armor up” for a life in Christ, Paul tells the church...And Pray. Prayer covers over all of these offensive and defensive pieces of armor.

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Engage the Scripture

- Read Ephesians 6.10-20. As you review the list of armor in this passage, which pieces of armor have the most kinks or are missing altogether? Peace? Faith? Truth? the Word of God? What are some practices that might strengthen those pieces of armor?
- In verses 18-20 Paul says to pray. In a sense, prayer is what you put on and ahead of your armor and the battle that lies ahead. This can be a strange idea to us. Can you think of a time when you felt like you were fully prepared to do something but had the time frame changed on you? How does it feel to stop even though you feel like you're ready to go?
- Stopping to pray puts us in a posture of surrender—we surrender to the direction and power of God in our life. It might momentarily look like defeat, but it's actually the way we live into the victory that we have in Christ. How can surrendering to God look like victory in your life? What big responses or decisions do you need to surrender to God?
- Many followers of Jesus feel like they don't know how to pray. Do you find it difficult to pray? What is your favorite way/time/or place to talk to God?
- Read Isaiah 54.16,17. God gives us perspective by pointing out that he is ultimately behind the creation of every weapon and tool that we need to live faithfully. God says that, "No weapon forged against you will prevail." That is quite a promise from God! What spiritual weapons do you feel are coming against you? How does this promise from God impact the way you enter the spiritual battlefield?
- We are invited to pray for the end. This is a prayer for the reign of Jesus to be fully realized *on earth as it is in heaven*. It's a prayer that every tear would be wiped away. No more pain, no more suffering. Is it easier to pray for the things that are right in front of you or to pray for the return of Jesus? Why?

Pray

Pray this benediction over each other.

Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. —Ephesians 6.23-24