

SPIRITUAL BATTLES (EPH 6:10-20)

Sermon by the Rev. Corinne Hodges, Sun., Aug. 23, SJOC

I. AIC armor

- A. Physical suit
- B. Crafted by human hands
- C. Tools for battle—Belt, Breastplate, Shoes, Shield, Helmet, Sword (weapon)
- D. Enemy: other human
- E. Prize: Land, possessions or power
- F. Battle we're used to hearing about (physical)

II. Battle Paul Eph. is a diff kind.

- A. No donning of physical suit/armor
- B. What we need created by God, not humans
- C. Tools—Truth, Righteousness, Whatever prepares us to proclaim the Gospel of PEACE, Faith, Salvation, The Word of God/Gospel/HS
- D. Enemy: dark, cosmic forces: Evil, opposed to God, rivals to Christ, Superhuman, have a type of control over human destiny
- E. Prize: our soul
- F. Spir. Battle

III. Adam—distant relative whose life has gone in a bad way.

Several poor decisions lead to an accident, arrest, short two-month jail term. Knowing his troubled past, judge lenient on him, giving him a chance in two months to turn his life around, otherwise more jail time.

- A. Putting on armor as prepares to do battle—self-preservation in environment he's never been in.
- B. Greater battle will be spir. as he fights all kinds of demons: denial, ego, guilt, recklessness, tries to figure out what God desires for his life
- C. Somewhere in two month time, he will have to make a choice: which side he is going to take. Give in to more darkness or choose God's way
- D. Extreme example of spir. battle, pray God strength

IV. All have had spir. struggles of one kind or another

- A. Something dark gets ahold of us & threatens to drag us away from God? Paul: Earthly agents of structure, groups opposed to God
- B. Powers/obsessions that infiltrate our own hearts: GREED, POWER, HATE, ENVY, dominate our lives
- C. Kind of warfare often has nothing to do with loss of earthly things—loss of faith, hope, presence of God
- D. Paul fought own spir. warfare—persecutor of Chr. to an apostle...did a complete 180. He chose God's way
- E. Even in CHAINS, he did not cave in to darkness or despair, self-pity, anger, hatred for his captors—he clung to Christ

IV. No one promised a life without struggle

Spir. struggles not easy

- A. Paul so serious uses war metaphors
 - 1. We need armor, it's going to be tough
 - 2. Have to be strong, stand firm and pray always
 - 3. Keep alert and persevere.
- B. Gospel: many J's disciples had own spir. battles & they couldn't take it, gave up, turned their backs on Christ & betrayed him
- C. They allowed darkness take over their lives

V. J: "Do you wish to go away?"

- A. Key question when we find ourselves in middle of spiritual struggle, faith greatly challenged. Eventually have to chose:
 - 1. Turn our backs and walk away from Christ
 - 2. Fight for God—choose to take God's side amidst the darkness

When we feel the presence of darkness creeping into our lives, may we stand firm and take up God's cause & don the whole armor of God.