

The Battleground

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Imagine if you will – a child born and raised behind enemy lines. He grows up behind a barbed wire perimeter. He has never left it. He doesn't even know he is in confinement. For him this is life. It is the only life he has ever known.

As he matures he becomes aware of the brutality of his world. He hears the cry of agony from others who are suffering. He sees the effects of malnourishment, even torture. Some days he curses his life and his world. But sometimes, at night when all is quiet and the sky is clear –he looks up at the stars and for a moment he forgets how bad it is. He finds moments of joy, moments of peace. He has a few friends and together they find something to laugh at despite their circumstances.

Then imagine if you will – a special mission – sent from allied forces. Men and women equipped and trained to penetrate this encampment and set some of these poor souls free. Imagine our young friend being rescued.

At first he may resist. After all this may have been a prison camp but it is the only “home” he has ever known. At first he may be distrustful, even fearful. His transformation from prisoner to free man will not be instant. It will take time to adjust. He will need care, encouragement. Eventually he will acclimate to his freedom. He will heal. But he will always remember the hell he came from and he will be forever grateful to the ONE who set him free.

After he is set free, when he feels safe, when he is fed, as he grows stronger, and he comes to understand the prison he was in, he may feel compelled to join the band of rescuers and return to that camp to set others free.

God give us each a call and the gifts to accompany that call. Some are called specifically to go after those “not yet believers” who are still in captivity. It is often said “The Lord does not call the equipped, but He equips the called.” So do not concern yourself with whether or not you are able to do this or that. Be assured that He who has chosen you, will indeed provide all you need to accomplish HIS purpose in you and through you.

Gifts and equipping of God: Ephesians 4:11 , Luke 19:10 , 1 Corinth 12:7-11 and 12:27-30

This story I shared is an allegory, a parable if you will. Yet this allegory is what many of us have experienced.

Colossians 1:13 – “For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves [Jesus] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Do you know you are at war? EVERY DAY.

There is a battle raging all around us. It is happening whether you are aware of it or not. What do we know of this war?

1. It is unseen.

Ephesians 6:12 “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.”

2. We – as believers – have already won.

- a. Romans 16:20 “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”
- b. Romans 8:31 “If God is for us, who shall be against us?”
- c. Romans 8:37 “ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”
- d. John 10:27-28 “ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”
- e. Slide 7 John 6:39 “ And this is the will of him , that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up on the last day.”
- f. John 16:33 “ I have told you these things that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

3. Our weapons are spiritual.

- a. **2 Cor. 10:3-4** “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

Some weapons are offensive, some are defensive. Here is a list – we will dive into each one in greater depth another time. For now take down the list and the reference verses.

1. **The Word of God** - Ephes 6:17,
2. **Faith** –Eph 6:16
3. **Prayer** – Eph 6:18-20, Mark 9:29, Ester 4:16
4. **Worship** - 1 Samuel 16:16
5. **Submission to God** – John 15:5, John 14:30, Matthew 28:16, 2 Samuel 22
6. **Agreement of Believers** – John 17:21
7. **Our Testimony** – OUR VICTORY STORIES – Rev. 12:11
8. **Obedience** – Daniel 6:24, Walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-20)
9. **Kingdom Principles** – Flip the Script – 2 corinth 9:6, Romans 12:21, Romans 12:14, Luke 17:23

The devil has two goals:

1. To keep humans from being restored to God
2. To keep those who have been restored from being effective as witnesses of God’s great grace and mercy.

So first he will do everything to keep you in that dark, prison camp.
Next – if you are fortunate enough to escape into God’s great kingdom – he will do everything he can to sabotage your life in Christ.

If you have never studied Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10-18 I want to encourage you to do so. **Ephesians 6:10-18 – The full Armor of God**

A soldier does not go into battle without suiting up first. This spiritual armor should be worn at all times. Memorize these verses and be sure to walk in full armor daily.

Remember you have an adversary whose one goal is to wreck your witness, to trip you up, to keep you quiet. Fill you with remorse. Regret. Shame. Discouragement. Tempt you with destructive vices. Silence the voice of God. Destroy the fellowship of believers. Divide families. Ruin your health. Cripple you with doubt, indecision and fear.

Satan wants to keep you imprisoned for all of your life.

Even after you are set free, he will taunt you, reminded you of how unworthy you are to do anything for Jesus.

Lies. All lies. Overcoming the lies is a lifelong battle. Replacing the lies with the TRUTH – Jesus – The WORD of GOD – only happens with much effort and intention.

You have been created to be part of a team; a winning team. Sin, in the form of rebellion to God, has separated all of us from that winning team. Jesus died to make the way for all of us to be restored. He died as a ransom to set all captives free.