

God Fights for You

Meditation #1 God Fights for You as a Warrior

I know that many of you know this, but some of you maybe don't. Our congregation has strong military ties since many of our members have either served in our armed forces or work for Hill Air Force Base. If I asked, "How many people have served our country so that it can maintain the freedoms and peace that we enjoy?" I wonder how many hands would go up. If I asked, "How many of you have seen combat?" I wonder how many hands would go up.

I have not served in the armed forces. I don't work for Hill Air Force Base. What can I say to you as Veterans Day approaches? I have not been there. I don't understand what you have gone through. All I can say is, "Thank you." Thank you for fighting for me and for this country. Thank you for protecting my freedom to preach God's Word without hindrance. Thank you for putting your life on the line for me.

People fight for us, whether we want them to or not. There is a war waging, a war that has waged for centuries, for millennia. It's specifically a battle waged for your soul, for your spiritual well-being. "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." (Ephesians 6:12)

Our enemy, our greatest foe, "the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8) His fangs are out. His lies sound sweet but they invite death. He is threatening our eternal life. He doesn't want to convert us or win us over to his side or to support his cause. He wants us to be conquered without taking any prisoners. He wants our total annihilation and destruction.

Who can fight against such a foe? In the past, there have been many great warriors to fight for a cause. None are greater, though, than the LORD. The LORD is a warrior. The LORD fights for us.

A reading from Exodus chapter 15, verses 2-3 and 6-11: **"The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name. Your right hand, LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, LORD, shattered the enemy. 'In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble. By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood up like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.' But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who among the gods is like you, LORD? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"**

We sing **Hymn 431, stanza 2.**

Meditation #2 God Fights for You as the Point Man and as the Rear Guard

In combat, someone has to lead the way. Someone has to take point and go before the rest of the group. They are in danger of running into the enemy first, to be the first one spotted, to be the first one to fall into a trap. They are also the first to engage the enemy.

Just as important as the point man is the rear guard. The focus of the group is on the front, but someone needs to watch the rear making sure that no one sneaks up on you, that no one flanks you. You need someone to watch your back so that you are not overtaken by surprise.

Our enemy, the devil, will try frontal assaults on us. He will also try to surprise attack us to try to catch us unawares. Sometimes temptations are very obvious, very much a grinding of your will to get you to do what you should not do, but the action is dangling out there like a prize, an incentive. Other times you are just going about your day, not even thinking about your enemy or his tactics and then a temptation seemingly comes up and takes you by surprise, blind-sides you.

We can't take point and watch our backs at the same time. We can't, but God can. He fights for you as the point man and as your rear guard.

A reading from Isaiah chapter 52 verse 12: **“But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.”**

We sing **Hymn 431, stanza 3.**

Meditation #3 God Fights for You When You have No Power to Face this Vast Army

Simple tactics say that if you have more troops than the other army, you stand a good chance of winning based on sheer numbers alone. But every now and again you get one of those great beats-the-odds stories. You think of those 300 Spartans and 800 Greeks who took their stand at the battle of Thermopylae. It wasn't as stylistic or glamorous as the movie 300 would make you think, but it was a small contingent of soldiers who were able to hold that pass against the Persian forces that outnumbered the Greeks upwards of 1000 to 1. Yet for a couple of day that stood their ground and repelled the Persians. Eventually, the Spartans fell. They were betrayed. The numbers were too much. They lost.

When fighting our enemy, the devil and the forces that fight with him, that fight to devour us, are overwhelming. The devil himself is a powerful enemy. What's worse is that he's not alone. When Satan rebelled against God, other angels rebelled with him. We call them demons. They are spirits. This is an enemy that we can't see coming. They are not confined by bodies of flesh and blood. The world fights against us by beckoning us away from God, trying to get us to desert him. Even we ourselves are our own worst enemy as we look at the other side and think it's time to lay down arms. There's no way that we can defeat them. This battle is lost before we even fight it.

In the history of God's people, they have often been outnumbered by their enemies. King Jehoshaphat of Judah saw a vast army coming to attack him. He simply admitted to God, “We don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” The Prophet Jahaziel spoke God's reply to the people. “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's... You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you.” (verse 15, 17)

Our battles against the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh are not about numbers. In fact, these battles are not our personal battles to fight all on our own. These battles belong to the Lord. He fights for us. He simply tells you to take your position against these evil forces. Stand firm. See that God will deliver you.

A reading from 2 Chronicles chapter 20 verses 12 to 17: **“Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD. Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. He said: “Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you.’ ”**

We sing **Hymn 431, stanza 4.**

Meditation #4 God Fights for You When You Run Out of Strength

Stand firm and watch the deliverance. It seems so easy, yet in the everyday battles against these dark forces, we grow weary. We want to carry on. The spirit is willing but the body is weak. The longer we look to ourselves to take up the sword against the evil forces the more our strength is drained away, the more tired we become, the closer we move to the brink of defeat. This happens in our battles against temptation, our battles against failing health, against personal difficulties, against grief, against relationships, and the list goes on. We are stretched thin. Our strength depletes. We are worn out, ready to surrender because the battle is too much, even with the Lord fighting for us.

Thinking of battles where the protagonists are vastly outnumbered, I immediately think of Lord of the Rings. I think of the battle of Two Towers. I think of the final epic battle in Return of the King. These fantasy novels were written by J.R.R. Tolkien who was himself a Christian. Knowing that, I have wondered if he thought of Isaiah chapter 40 when he penned the protagonists' victory. They were outnumbered. Their strength was giving out. But then the eagles came. They turned the tide. Our protagonists had renewed strength. The eagles essentially brought victory to our heroes.

When you grow tired and wearied in your battle against the devil, the world, and your sinful flesh, don't look to yourself to keep fighting. Instead, hope in the Lord. He not only fights for you when you run out of strength, but he also renews your strength so that you will soar on wings like eagles.

A reading from Isaiah chapter 40 verses 28 to 31: **"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."**

We sing **Hymn 440**.

Meditation #5 God Fights for You so that You are More than a Conqueror

Those who trust solely in military might, in weaponry, in talent and skill, they will eventually fall. But those who trust in the name of the Lord our God, they will be given victory. We will be given ultimate victory in our war against the devil and the dark forces of this world because our God fights for us. He fought for us by giving us his Son, not just as someone to follow and learn from, but as someone who sacrificed himself to conquer our enemy.

God fights for us. This means that no matter how bad the battle seems to be going, no matter how many times you find yourself wounded by the enemy, no matter how many times you leave the safety of your point man and rear guard, no matter how weak and worn out you feel, God has won us the victory. The proof is in the fact that he raised his Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead. He is seated at the right hand of God, that position of power and authority. He, the one who has power over all, fights for us. If God is for us, who can possibly stand against us and win? The answer: nobody. By what Christ has done for us, God has made us more than conquerors!

A reading from Romans chapter 8 verses 31 to 37: **"What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Amen.**

We sing **Hymn 431, stanzas 5 & 6**.