

# What is Jesus Doing?

## EQUIPPED FOR BATTLE

Here is the text of a sermon that I was privileged to give this morning at Abundant Life Church in Simi Valley...

In his last couple of sermons, Pastor George talked about the battle within us. Although we become a “new creation” when we receive Jesus as Lord, and we have at that moment become “crucified with Him” and our body of sin is nailed to the Cross with Him, we often still struggle with the reality of ongoing sin in our lives. As Pastor said, the answer to this problem is the renewing of our minds through the Holy Spirit. Let’s talk a bit today about why we struggle, what the battlefield looks like, and what we can do about it.

I’m going to start at the beginning...

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

- 2 Corinthians 5:17

So... When we receive Jesus as Lord, our spirit is awakened from its dormancy. At that moment we become a “new creation”. As the Spirit of God hovered over the waters before the first creation, the Holy Spirit gently awakens our spirit to its new life as master and commander of our soul.

Our soul, which consists of our Mind, Emotions, and Will, often does not take this lightly. After all, our soul, left to its own devices in the old person, had full reign over the Body, and our dormant spirit was suppressed by the raging desires of the flesh. In this case the flesh I am referring to is that body of sin that is the soul’s nature without the influence, guidance and control of the Holy Spirit.

That is a lot to digest. Let’s break it down a bit.

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First, let's talk about the triune or Three-part Nature of God. We believe that there is One God in Three Persons. I am often asked by seekers and unbelieving fellow Jews how it is possible that the One God of the Old Testament, referred to in the most Holy prayer of the Jews, the Sh'ma, which says, "hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One", can be the Three Persons of the New Covenant as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and still be one God. Here is a simple way to look at it... Water is necessary to sustain life, just as the essence and underlying power of God is necessary to sustain life. Now we all know that water is able to take three forms. Liquid, Solid and Vapor. So... water, ice, or steam, they are all H<sub>2</sub>O which we all know as "water".

This is an interesting analogy. We refer to Jesus as the Living Water and He is the central Person of the Bible, the One who pre-existed Creation with the Father and the Holy Spirit and was the designer of the Universe. It was Jesus who Himself became the Bridge between a Righteous, Holy God and depraved, sinful people so that the relationship between God and man could be restored. Jesus is the one we come to when we are in need. He would be like water in its drinkable, consumable state.

The Father is the solid, rock-like Creator who gave all things life and under Whose authority Jesus put Himself in His time on earth and in Whom we trust.

The Holy Spirit is the One who hovered over the waters like vapor before the creation and is the One who is able to be in all places and all times drawing us to Jesus, strengthening us in our trials, and performing mighty miracles, all by the Will of God who is all three and yet One. Amazing right?

Now let's talk about the triune, three-part nature of people, you and me. We are also three in one. In the basic, a person consists of body, soul and spirit. People often confuse the soul and spirit as the same but they are not. Let's break it down.

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**One. The Body:** The body is the outside and inside physical working of the creature that is a man or woman. It has five senses through which we perceive the world around us. It is an amazing and incredibly complex engine that gives us the ability to experience physical sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. It also allows us to think and speak and interact with other people and the world around us. The senses enable us to experience pleasure or pain. The body does not like pain and generally craves pleasure. That is One. The Body.

**Two. The Soul:** The soul is the inner person, what the Bible calls the “heart” of a man. The Lord told us through His Prophet Jeremiah about the unregenerated soul.

*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked;*

*Who can know it?*

- Jeremiah 17:9

In this scripture, Jeremiah refers to the human soul BEFORE the spirit is awakened by the Holy Spirit to make Jesus Lord. The Soul interestingly, is also triune. Your soul has three parts. It consists of, as we mentioned earlier, the Mind, the Emotions and the Will. Except for the automatic functions that keep the body alive, the body does whatever the soul wants through the Will.

The reason that the soul, without the spirit in control of it, is so dangerous is that it is the abiding place of free will. The soul, without the spirit's guidance, is free will run riot. I know that before Jesus took control of my spirit through the Holy Spirit, I was highly covetous, unstable, and fear and desire ruled me. It was particularly dangerous because the physical Body we have is always under the control of the soul. Think of it. Your mind, your emotions and your ability to make decisions (the will) are all you need to operate in the physical world. Without the guidance of our spirit (which in my case was asleep in a back room), we can and will, do a lot of damage to ourselves and others.

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**Now as to number Three, the spirit of a person:** In the unregenerated person, that is, the person before the soul is awakened by the Holy Spirit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the spirit is like a baby. It needs very little and does even less. The sinful nature and all of the demanding of the soul of the Body's time and attention keeps the spirit suppressed and the enemy's constant lies and temptations make it even worse. However, God has made available to us a great salvation from the power of Sin in the person of Jesus Christ! So... Jesus did what only He could do so that our spirit can be restored into right relationship with God through the Power of the Holy Spirit! Now can I get an amen Hallelujah?

So now that we are saved, and our soul is awakened, now what? Paul tells us...

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

- Romans 6:3-6

So... Sin should no longer be a problem for us right? And yet many of us are still in a battle. Let's look at how we can wage war in Christ Jesus against the sin that can trip us up.

This is what the spirit of a person looks like once it has been awakened and aligned properly with the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus to the Glory of the Father...

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A properly aligned new creation in Christ looks like this... Instead of the person being a body run by a soul run riot carrying around a little baby spirit, the New Person is a healthy, vibrant spirit, in communion with the Holy Spirit, in the driver's seat over the soul with the body as the engine that accomplishes good works.

So... once the spirit is awakened or regenerated in Christ, our mind, emotions and will are now also New Creations. Our Mind is submitted to the Mind of Christ, our Emotions are now all Love and both our mind and emotions are receivers of the fruit of the spirit as the body now does good works through the power of our will that is aligned, receptive and obedient to God's Will. That is why Ephesians 2:10 tells us... we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

So...

If you are not living a life of power, grace, truth and love then you are losing that battle. Let's talk about how to win and finish well.

Paul describes the battle we are in and how to be prepared to win it. Here is his description...

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

- Ephesians 6:10-13

The problem, it seems, is also the solution. We have access to the whole Armor of God in Christ but we have to put it on. Our will is still free. So if we want to win the battles we face we must be intentional about it.

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As the Holy Spirit lives in us through communication with our spirit, like an Admiral to our Captain, we are also “hidden with Christ in God”. Just as God sees His Beloved son when He looks at us in Christ Jesus, so when we are wearing the full Armor of God, the enemy sees Jesus. No contest there right? He has to flee. Let’s see what the whole Armor of God looks like....

*Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

- Ephesians 6:14-17

In order to be effective in the battle against our own sinful flesh, which remains to some degree even in the born-again person, we need to put on, EVERY day, the full Armor of God. The enemy will attack wherever we are weak or unprotected. The Belt, the Breastplate, the Shield and the Helmet are all defensive weapons.

**The Belt is the Truth of the Gospel** and we who believe are wearing it at all times. We hold the Truth of the Gospel at the very Center core of our lives.

**The Breastplate is the Righteousness of God**, not our own self-righteousness, and is attached to the Belt of Truth. When we have on God’s Truth and Righteousness, the powers and principalities cannot penetrate to our weaknesses because we are protected by God’s Kingdom Power.

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**The Shield of Faith** is our most important defensive weapon. An unshakeable faith is the surest defense against the fiery arrows of the evil one. Here's what using your faith in God's promises as a shield looks like... The devil tells me I am weak, confused, untrustworthy, foolish and unloved. My faith tells me that I am strong (in Him), confident (in Him), trustworthy (in Him), wise (in Him) and beloved always. Fiery darts? Quenched!

**The armor for the feet and lower part of the body** is the "Preparation of the Gospel of Peace". With this protection we move forward confidently, already prepared because we have done the work of studying His Gospel and as we advance, with the goal of freeing the captives of the enemy with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are protected because as we advance, peace is established.

We "take up" the **Helmet of Salvation**. Now the Helmet of Salvation is not our salvation itself, which is assured to us when we first receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The Helmet is the HOPE of eternal life with which we are protected from the lies and doubt that the enemy uses to throw us off. We take up this HOPE every time we are attacked with doubt and God strengthens us because we have chosen to Hope in His promise that we will live forever with Him. The lies of the enemy therefore cannot stick in our mind.

Our offensive weapon is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. John the Beloved tells us that Jesus Christ was "The Word" from the beginning and was with God and He was God. Having accomplished the work of the Cross, He sits on the right Hand of the Father, calling on the Holy Spirit to defend the brethren. HE Himself is our offensive weapon against the enemy of our souls. As was told the Kings of Judah whenever they would return to the Lord.

*"The battle is not ours, but God's!"*

- 2 Chronicles 20:15

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When we wield the Sword of the Spirit, all three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit move as one to attack the enemy and victory is assured.

The Lord has also provided us with the Bible, the inspired, written Word of God, which when we apply it, sends the enemy fleeing and also slays the demons that have been dispatched to waylay us on the battlefield. God Himself strengthens our spiritual arms for the battle when we wield this Sword faithfully.

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

- Hebrews 4:12

Here is something to think about... The Word of God, also known as the Sword of the Spirit, helps us to divide what is soulish (our own desires) from what is truly spiritual (His will for us). When we spend time meditating on His Word, His Holy Spirit guides us into understanding and the renewing of our mind which leads us into the newness of life.

Finally...

*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

- Ephesians 6:18

Prayer is HOW we use the offensive weapons that belong to the Armor of God. With our defensive Armor in place, and our Shield of Faith at the ready, using the Sword of the Holy Spirit, we can pray effectively for wisdom and strengthening in whatever trials we are in, for help in overcoming sin on the battlefield, and we can effectively bring God's power into the lives of our families, our friends and our neighbors as well as all the saints worldwide! How?



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*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.*

- 2 Corinthians 10:4

So now we have seen how we passed from death into Life. We have all been crucified with our Lord and raised up as soldiers who report to our Supreme Commanding Officer, Jesus. We have power and authority over all demonic powers and principalities in this world. We only have to armor up and use the power of the Holy Spirit to see the victory. To God be the Glory!

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If you are needing a sample prayer on how to put on the armor of God, try this one and feel free to customize it to your needs... Remember to pray this out loud.

*Father God I pray the waistband of Truth on myself that your truth would be the center of my life.*

*I pray the breastplate of righteousness that the world would see your righteousness in all that I do.*

*I pray the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace that wherever I walk, I would be a peacemaker with your desire and power to create peace where the world wants war.*

*I pray that I would take up my helmet of salvation so that the lies of the enemy would not be able to stick in my mind as I enter the battle.*

*I pray that my shield of Faith would be strong and flexible, made of the wood of the cross and able to quench, not just deflect, the fiery darts of the enemy that are around me, and that there would be no collateral damage.*

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*I pray my arms would be strengthened for the sword of the spirit to divide soul and Spirit, first in myself that I would see what your spirit speaking to my spirit, and what is merely my soulish desires; and then to face the enemy with the Word of God to vanquish the strongholds and release the captives from the enemy's power.*

*In Jesus' most precious name,  
Amen*

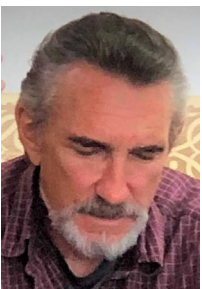
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Here is something I have used to encourage the troops in my favorite role as Kingdom Field Lieutenant. Speak these often out loud until you have them memorized.

- I am a soldier in the Army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer.
- The Holy Bible is my Code of Conduct.
- Faith, Prayer, and the Word are my weapons of warfare.
- I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity, and tested by fire.
- I am a volunteer in this Army, and I am enlisted for eternity. I will either retire in this Army when the Lord returns, or die in this Army; but I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out.
- I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable.
- If my God needs me, I am there.
- If He needs me in Sunday school, to teach the children, or on the streets to work with the youth, feed the poor, or preach to the lost, He can use me because I am there!
- I am a soldier. I am not a baby.
- I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up, or pepped up. I am a soldier.

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- No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me. I am a soldier.
- I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name, and building His Kingdom! No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to.
- I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.
- When Jesus called me into the Army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. I will win. My God has and will continue to supply all my needs. I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph.
- I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me. Devils cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me and hell cannot handle me. I am a soldier.
- Death cannot destroy me. For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me to Captain and then allow me to rule with Him. I am a soldier in the Army, and I'm marching, claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around. I am a soldier, marching heaven bound. Here I stand! Will you stand with me?



*In His Grip Of Grace and Full Armor,  
- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi*