

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of April 22, 2018

THEME: "Jesus: Our Mighty Captain" CAPTAIN OF SALVATION

Sunday **Read Hebrews 2:3-12**

"For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The title of "Captain" for our Savior implies warfare, and that is an apt description for the Christian life. The thought that Christianity is for weaklings is one of the many deceptions of the devil. Any person who thinks that is severely misled. No weakling can withstand the attacks of the devil and the forces of the darkness of this world. Again and again, we are commanded to *"Be strong and of a good courage."* And that is what it takes to live for the glory of God in a sin-cursed world that is increasingly being duped by the enemy of human souls. There are many battles to be won on many different battle fronts. It is not a war in the conventional sense, which is the point made in Ephesians 6:12: *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against...the rulers of the darkness of this world."* To fight the battles of spiritual war against the darkness of the world, people must come to the light, the spiritual light, the True Light. That is the importance of John 1:9, which says this about the Lord Jesus: *"That was the True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."* Without a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, people remain in spiritual darkness which is perpetuated by Satan, who uses a lot of false lights in the world of religion and education. It is sad to see so many remain deceived by following the false lights of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 6:23 and 15:14: *"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, great is that darkness...they be blind leaders of the blind."* The only antidote is the light of the gospel. A good description of spiritual war and the means of victory is II Corinthians 4:4: *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

FIGHT OF FAITH

Monday **Read I Timothy 6:11-14**

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Notice that the calling of every Christian is to be engaged in the *"fight of faith."* Yes, there will be great opposition! The darker the world becomes by her fleeing the light of Holy Scriptures, the more fierce the battle. The Christian goes against the tide of the world, which is abiding by manmade righteousness, which when compared to the righteousness of God is, as mentioned by the prophet in Isaiah 64:6, as *"filthy rags."* How can that be so? Probably the best comparison between God's righteousness and that of human righteousness in Isaiah 5:20, which says this: *"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness."* When our nation abandoned the Holy Scriptures, which historically had been the foundation of our government and public education, things the Bible forbids became acceptable in our culture; hence we have the killing of the unborn and relationships that are against human nature. The result is a record number of suicides and deaths caused by the misuse of drugs. The hate culture in which we are living has replaced living with the Biblical admonition of *"thou shalt love one another,"* as taught in the Ten Commandments, the public display of which has been declared unconstitutional. What a fight it is!

WAR OF THE FLESH

Tuesday **Read Galatians 5:16-17**

"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." One of the battle fronts is the internal one which all believers face. The flesh wants to engage in lusts over and above the actual physical needs. All humans have both physical and spiritual needs that need to be satisfied for fulfillment in life. The spiritual needs can be satisfied only by regaining spiritual life that had been lost by sin. By receiving Christ as Savior, an individual once again has a living spirit to replace the dead spirit with which he was born. Jesus, in John 3:3-7, called that being *"born again."* That opens the door to both physical and spiritual satisfaction, which is the abundant life. It also creates a conflict because spiritual needs can be satisfied only by spiritual means. Too often, fleshly desire battles the spirit causing a person to engage in fleshly

excess creating a problem. Praise God for the indwelling Holy Spirit to give us victory, but only insofar as we yield to Him! That makes time in the Word and prayer and in fellowship with believers so vital!

SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

Wednesday..... Read II Corinthians 10:4-5

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Spiritual war must be fought with spiritual weapons! Notice that the mind is a battle ground; that is where Satan attacks by placing in front of us to see and hear things that arouse fleshly lusts that are contrary to thoughts that honor God. The defense against such attacks is to *"bring into captivity every thought."* The key to overcoming the things that generate unclean thoughts is to take control and replace them with thoughts that would be God-honoring! If our thoughts are consistent with what God is trying to accomplish in and through us, we have won that battle of the mind. It is the mind that generates action; it is in the mind where we make our decisions. What we feed our minds will ultimately have an effect on what we do. The teaching of Jesus in Luke 6:45 is good to keep in mind: *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."* What are we storing in the treasury of our hearts and minds?

SPIRITUAL ARMOR

Thursday Read Ephesians 6:10-18

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Spiritual battles can be won only by using spiritual armor! We have the equipment to wage spiritual war in this great chapter in Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus. To go into battle without the armor is foolishness. Daily we should make it a priority to put it on. What do we put on? Well, it is good to equip ourselves with gems of truth by time in the Word, which fills our minds with God's righteousness. And equipping ourselves with Biblical truth increases our faith, the point made in Roman 10:17: *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Our faith becomes increasingly stronger in proportion to the time spent in God's Word. And, according to I John 5:4, it is our faith in God that gives us victory: *"This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."* In the armor listed in Ephesians 6, we see that it is the *"shield of faith wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil."* The truth of Scriptures is our offensive weapon as well, for we read this: *"Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."* Finally, we should use prayer as a weapon as emphasized in verse 18: *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."* Let us be looking out for all fellow believers in our army!

ARMY OF CHRIST

Friday Read II Timothy 2:1-4

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." The army of Christ must be focused and not be distracted by things that would reduce our effectiveness in winning the battle against our adversary who is trying to prevent God from having success on His earth. The final victory is sure! Christ will eventually come and incarcerate the devil forever; the delay in that is to give more and more people the opportunity to come to a saving knowledge of Christ. That is why God is being patient according to what we read in II Peter 3:9: *"Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* The immediate goal for all of us is to work together to win souls for Christ! If God's people get entangled in the things of the world and over involved in worldly pursuits, they lose their effectiveness in reaching souls. On the contrary, by our involvement in the world on the job or in use of our personal time, we can and should do so with eternal values in view. There are many colleagues where we work who need the Savior, as well as fellow students and neighbors! Win them!

BATTLE FOR SOULS

Saturday..... Read James 5:19-20

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." One of the great victories in spiritual war is to free people being held hostage by the devil. That is the plight of all unbelievers. Just as the devil wanted to lure Adam and Eve away from fellowship with God, so he does with every person on earth. Every human being is either on the road that leads to heaven or the road that leads to hell. That is the solemn message of Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14: *"Broad is the way that leads to destruction...Narrow is the way that leads to life."* Jesus is the way to heaven, the claim He made in John 14:6: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me."* Freeing people from the grips of the devil

and all his deceptions is called soul winning, among the greatest thrills, if not the greatest thrill in life! Prayer is a vital part of soul winning as Paul stated in Colossians 4:3: "*Praying for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.*" Like all battles, it is a team effort, laboring together with God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some plant seeds by sharing Scriptures in hearts and minds, and others water the seeds with a word of witness, and the Holy Spirit brings conviction and clarification to bring a lost sheep into the fold. What joy!