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March 2018

THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

Greetings, more than conquerors!

We pray that you all are experiencing the victory in your lives that Jesus provided through His death and resurrection!

This month, I wanted to begin by giving you an exciting update: My first book that I wrote close to ten years ago - *THE BELIEVER'S BATTLE PLAN*- has recently been revised and we just rolled out its second printing! It contains a new cover, but still has the same life-changing truths from 2 Chronicles chapter twenty inside!

So, if you are going through a trial or tribulation- a battle for your faith- this book would be an encouragement to you! I have received numerous testimonies throughout the past decade of how this book anchored them through tough times and showed them exactly what to do in their trial.

If you are interested, simply contact me with the info below for more information or you can go to our website at www.treydickerson.com and order yours online.

So, it seemed good to me regarding this month's teaching, to give you an excerpt from *THE BELIEVER'S BATTLE PLAN* that I believe will minister to you. So, let's pick up in verse thirteen of 2 Chronicles chapter 20:

STAND, THEREFORE

After King Jehoshaphat and his people magnified God and presented their crisis to Him, verse thirteen says, *"Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord."*

I want you to notice that this verse says that all of Judah stood before the Lord after taking their situation to Him in prayer. This is a huge point!

You see, it is one thing to declare something in prayer, but it is another thing to actually stand like they did after they made their confessions of faith. The reason for this is because saying the things that Jehoshaphat said in his prayer is not the most difficult thing for us to do; what is truly difficult is to actually put these truths into practice after we pray. What is of extreme importance is what we do during that period of time between our prayer and the victory being manifested.

And Jehoshaphat's kingdom made the right choice yet again: They stood. Likewise, our primary responsibility after we have presented our case before God is to just simply "stand."

In Ephesians chapter six- our most concentrated instructions on spiritual warfare in the Bible- we are told several times that, having done all, we are to simply stand.

You see, there is a reason why the Apostle Paul mentioned "standing" three times in this chapter that contains our most detailed explanation of spiritual warfare. The reason is because under this new and better Covenant, the battle has already been won. Jesus Christ spoiled principalities and powers through His death, burial, and resurrection two thousand years ago (Colossians 2:15). Amen.

This word "spoiled" here describes someone being stripped of all their possessions, and one of those things was their weapons. It is for this reason that the New International Version says in this verse that Jesus "disarmed" the enemy.

Now in Isaiah 54:17, the prophet said that no weapon formed against us will prosper, but the truth is that now the enemy does not even have any weapons to form against us. He has been stripped of all the weapons that he ever had to form against mankind. All he has now is his knack for deceiving us into believing he has any

power over our lives whatsoever. He will lie to us, telling us that he is going to steal, kill, or destroy what we have. But the truth is, he actually lacks any power to accomplish any of those threats.

So, you could say it this way: **Under our new covenant, the only effective weapon the enemy has against us is the illusion that he even has an effective weapon.** This, my friends, is a powerfully true statement!

So, what shall say to these things? We can boldly say, "I already have the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57)! Thanks, be unto God!"

STEADFAST AND IMMOVABLE

So, if the battle has already been won and we already have the victory, what is the only thing left to do? You guessed it- The only thing left to do is just simply stand.

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul went on to say after he made this glorious statement of victory in 1 Corinthians 15:57- "*Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*" Then, in verse fifty-eight, he went on to say, "*Therefore* (i.e. in light of the victory Jesus has already purchased for us), *my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable...*"

What this verse is saying is that since God has already given us victory over every one of life's challenges, our only responsibility is to be established and unmovable; grounded and steadfast. In other words, our only job is to not be moved off what God has said and to hold fast to our confession of faith. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul meant in Ephesians chapter six when he told us "to stand."

Now to "stand" implies holding our ground. It implies not moving from where God has placed us or from what God has done for us.

So, after we take our situation before the Lord in prayer and cast all of our cares over on Him, our next responsibility is to "stand"- to not be moved from what the Word of God tells us and to not waver from what we are promised.

Now make no mistake about it, standing is easier said than done. The enemy will do everything he can to try and get you to cast away your confidence and let your confession slip away. One of his favorite devices he uses is what the Bible calls *tribulations*.

This word "tribulation" comes from the Greek word *thilipsis*. This word was used to describe being under extreme pressure. The word picture that would best illustrate this word *thilipsis* is that of a huge boulder being placed on top of someone. Therefore, *thilipsis* describes circumstances and situations that put a "ton of pressure" on our mind, will, and emotions. I believe all of us can relate to this word picture I just described.

I know we all have had circumstances in our lives where we felt extreme pressure mentally, emotionally, and even physically.

STAYING UNDER POWER

But the Bible also tells us of a virtue that is to be our response to these tribulations: It is called patience (Romans 5:3-4 & James 1:2-4).

This word "patience" comes from the Greek word *hupomeno* which literally means to stay, dwell, or abide under something. In other words, it describes enduring or standing underneath something. So, what is the thing that this patient person is standing underneath? It is the tribulation- the circumstances that weigh on us and put extreme pressure on us.

The enemy is ultimately using these tribulations for one purpose- to get us to move. His goal is to get us to

cave in under the pressure. His aim is to get us to move from where God wants us. But not only does he try to get us to quit trusting the Lord in the current trial we are in; his ultimate aim is to steal all our faith in God.

So, as the Word of God teaches us, our response to this pressure is to endure, to be patient, and to not let the circumstances move us from God's perfect will for us.

Yes, biblical "standing" means to stand up strong under the pressure and not be moved. Therefore, allowing this "staying under power" (i.e. patience) to work in us during times of great pressure is what it means to stand.

So, I exhort you today, don't be moved! Don't quit! Let patience have her perfect work in you, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (James 1:4). Yes, be strong and stand against the temptation to throw away your hope in the promises of God. Do not cast away your confidence which has great recompense for reward (Hebrews 10:35)! Amen.

IT IS NOT OUR FIGHT

So, after Jehoshaphat and all of Judah stood before the Lord, the Holy Spirit began to speak through a man who was in the midst of the assembly. The man God used was a Levite by the name of Jahaziel. God used this ordinary man to share some encouraging words about the trial they were in.

So, I want us to spend the rest of this newsletter taking an in-depth look at some of the things that God said to Jehoshaphat through this prophecy.

God began to speak to them the following words: *"Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's."* (verse fifteen).

What an awesome statement this is that the Holy Spirit made at the end of verse fifteen- "The battle is not yours, but God's!" We would do good to continuously reflect on this truth in order to remind us that the battle is not ours, but the battle is God's.

This powerful phrase has a whole range of applications to our lives:

You see, these "ites"- the armies that had allied themselves against Jehoshaphat- were types and shadows of the kingdom of darkness that we wrestle against under our New Covenant. And these demonic forces manifest themselves in many different ways. Their effects range from the more obvious demonic devices such as depression, oppression, sickness, and poverty to the subtler areas of darkness such as bitterness, envy, strife, and selfishness. So, when it is written that the battle is not ours but the Lord's, this applies to any of these different "ites" that come against us today.

For example, when we see the enemy working to destroy our marriages- trying to generate strife and bring division between us and our spouses- we should remember that the battle is not ours, but God's. Sure, in the middle of these difficult situations, the enemy will feed us the lie that our marriage is hopeless and that our spouse will never change. Sure, he will try and deceive us into thinking that we better defend ourselves lest we be taken advantage of. But the truth is that the battle for our marriage is not ours, it is God's.

God is able to create hope where there seems to be hopelessness. God is able to bring change when change seems impossible. God is able to heal, restore, and even prosper our relationship with our spouse no matter how discouraging our situation might seem. It is His battle, and He is resolved to fight it for us. Hallelujah!

Do you know what happens when we see the challenges we encounter as our battles? Our pride will cause us to attempt to take things into our own hands.

For example, when we have lost loved ones, we feel such an urgency to see them come to the light that we

allow that fear of their present course to drive us. When this happens, we will take every opportunity that we get to hammer them with the truth and witness to them. While our motives are good, we need to also understand that the battle for our loved-one's salvation is not ours; it is also the Lord's battle. We need to understand that we cannot make anybody see the light; only God can because no one comes to Jesus unless the Holy Spirit draws them (John 6:44 & 16:8).

Now please understand me: I am definitely not promoting some kind of radical predestination teaching where we do not need to ever witness to them. All I am saying is that we need to understand that the fight for their salvation has not been laid squarely on our shoulders; it is the Lord's battle to fight. Therefore, we should just rest in Him- trusting that He is fighting that battle and drawing them to Himself- while at the same time being open to share the truth with them as the Lord opens up the opportunities.

You see, understanding that each and every battle we encounter in our life is the Lord's battle and not our own is such an important part of the Christian life. It is a principle that we see all throughout God's Word and He desires us to understand: We are victorious only by the grace of God and not by any works that we have done. We are saved by the grace of God. We are healed by the grace of God. We are prosperous by the grace of God. God's grace is Him fighting all our battles for us, and it has been His plan for mankind since Adam.

Therefore, every battle we find ourselves in- whether it be over our ministries, our physical health, our finances, our families, or our own souls- God has said that all of these are His battles and, therefore, should not concern us in the least. Thank you, Jesus!

THE ROOT OF FEARING DEFEAT

Let's now draw our attention to the phrase that the Holy Spirit included before He said that the battle is not ours, but God's. Again, He said- *"Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's."*

By including that word "for" before this phrase we have just covered, God is telling us why we are not to be afraid or dismayed when these "ites" come against us.

So, what was the reason that He gave them not to fear? It was because it was not even their battle; it was God's. He told them not to be afraid or dismayed because the battle was not even theirs to fight.

You see, if the battle was ours then we would have every reason to be afraid because we know that we have limitations. We know that there are many problems that we will encounter that are beyond our control. Therefore, if these battles were indeed ours, we most definitely would have every reason to be afraid.

But let me ask you a question: Are you ever afraid of God losing any of His battles? Of course, you are not. Then can you guess the only reason why we ever get afraid when alarming situations enter into our life? It is because we see them as our battles. Yes, the only reason we become dismayed is because we incorrectly see these huge and insurmountable problems as our battles, and not God's. Therefore, the very root of the fear of defeat is not being fully persuaded that the battles we encounter are the Lord's battles and not ours.

Sure, if we were asked if we believed that the problems we have were our battles we would deny it, but the evidence of our faith is in our actions. If we are in fear, it is because we do not truly believe God will fight that battle for us. Yes, if we are afraid and worried it is for one of two reasons: Either we do not believe God can handle it or we do not believe He will handle it. And usually our deficiency is not in believing that God has the power or ability to do what He wants to. What we are generally deficient in is believing that God actually wants to. In other words, most believers are simply not convinced that God is willing and resolved to fight all of their battles for them.

But the truth is God has said that every battle we find ourselves in that was instigated by the enemy is not our battle; they are His battles. Therefore, if we saw our problems in this light, we would be full of peace in the midst of the storm because we know that God is more than able to take care of these situations.

BE STILL AND KNOW

Now I want us to skip ahead to something that the Lord spoke to Jehoshaphat through Jahaziel because it pertains to the theme of this chapter. He went on to tell them in verse seventeen: *“stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”*

This extremely powerful statement is one that is very near and dear to my heart. Let me explain:

I found myself in a particular trial very early in my Christian walk and God spoke this very statement to me. The details of this battle are not important, but the outcome is. I received a bad report one day that one of the many poor decisions I made before I came to know the Lord had come back to haunt me. When this news got back to me, I was absolutely terrified to say the least. Unfortunately, I did not respond the way Jehoshaphat did upon hearing his bad news when fear tried to grip him. To be honest with you, I just panicked. I called everybody I could think of for counsel, legal advice, etc. I got into what I would call: a “flesh frenzy.” But thank God, He was gracious to me.

Later that afternoon, after I had done everything I knew to do, He revealed to me a portion of Exodus 14:13 which says exactly the same thing as here in 2 Chronicles 20:17- *“Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”* When I got this word from God my faith was ignited! I knew I had heard from the Lord! I am sure this was how Jehoshaphat and all Judah felt too because it was a fresh Word for them as well. When I got this Word, I knew that the Lord was going to deliver me from the consequences of this past mistake. And, glory to God, He did! He supernaturally delivered me from this situation like He delivered the children of Israel in their predicament. Thank you, Jesus!

You see, when the children of Israel were delivered from their bondage to Pharaoh, God began to lead them to the Land of Promise. However, after their exodus, they came to this apparent barrier- the Red Sea. And on top of that, Pharaoh and his army were pursuing them from behind. Their slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt was a type of our bondage to the devil in the world. Therefore, this pursuit by Pharaoh is symbolic of how our past will attempt to recapture us after we have begun to follow Jesus.

This is a biblical illustration of what the devil was trying to do to me. But, glory to God, He communicated to me the same message He gave the children of Israel through Moses- Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

So, what does this statement mean, to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord? What was God saying to the children of Israel, to Jehoshaphat, and to me and you?

He was basically telling them and us today: “Just stand still. I don’t want any help. I don’t want any self-effort on your part. I just want you to be still and watch Me deliver you.” Another good paraphrase would be: “Guys, don’t do anything. Just sit back and watch Me be your God by my supernaturally delivery.” This is very similar to what we just talked about when we discussed how they simply stood before the Lord after Jehoshaphat’s prayer ended.

You see, God does not need, nor does He want our help in these battles. If they are His battles (and they are), then we should not make them our battles by trying to help Him out. I understand this requires a lot of faith, especially for us out there who like to be in control and are very task-oriented people. Nevertheless, if we want to avoid giving birth to any “Ishmaels”- that is, producing the fruit of doing things in our strength and according to our own understanding- then we better allow God to give us the victory in His way and in His timing.

This is a word from God to every generation of His people: “Don’t try and help Me out. Just be still and watch Me be God.”

LET GO AND LET GOD

Many of us have heard the verse quoted that says- *“Be still and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10). We

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usually hear it used to teach us to get quiet in His presence, but actually it denotes the same thing we have seen here in this phrase we have been covering.

You see, God desires for us to know Him as our God. He desires for us to let Him be our God and He wills for us to experience all that He has to offer in our lives. In other words, He wants us to allow Him to do the miraculous in our lives. He wants us to allow Him to do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ever ask or even think. He wants us to fully experience Him as our God, but we have to let Him do this.

So how do we let Him be God to us? We let him be our God by learning to “stand still”- that is, not taking things into our own hands and promptly doing whatever He tells us to do. These are two of the greatest keys to experientially knowing Him as our God.

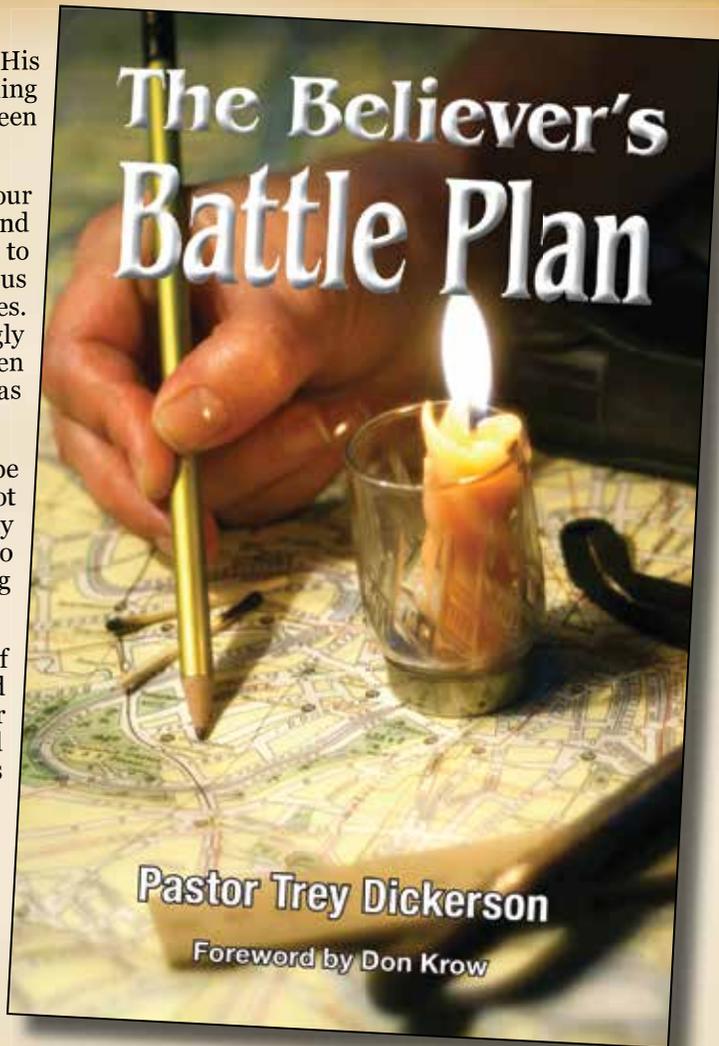
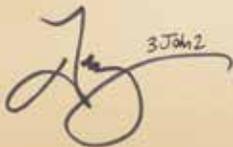
You see, we need to avoid the temptations of the flesh and mind that scream to “Help God out!” as we wait on Him to bring about our salvation. It is tough on our flesh to “stand still” as we see our enemy approaching. It is difficult to not get involved and do something as trying circumstances are surrounding us. But being “still” is a must if we are going to receive God’s best kind of victory. And we can only be still like this because He has assured us that the battle we are facing is not our battle; it is His battle.

So, let the Lord fight your battle today. Let Him be your God. Allow Him to manifest Himself in your life and bring you your desired deliverance.

The battle belongs to the Lord, but the victory belongs to us! Amen.

Till next month... Maranatha!

Victoriously,



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