

**Fight for It – Part 1**  
**“Prepare for War...”**  
**April 14-15<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Intro:**

**- At the beginning of the year, we talked about how we believe God is calling us to “Inherit the Land” as a church.**

**- Corporately there are unprecedented opportunities in front of us!**

**- Personally, the same is true as well.**

**- We all have Unprecedented Opportunities ahead of us, but...**

**- We are not living in a Spiritually Neutral environment.**

**- IOW, the devil is not going to let us just walk in and take what he has had dominion over for a long, long time!**

**- Most of us...**

**1) Underestimate how much of a Spiritual Battle we are in.**

**2) Are Unprepared for the Spiritual Battle, once we are aware of it!**

**- This weekend we are beginning a 4 part series called, “Fight for It” to “Build us up in our Most Holy Faith” so we can fight more effectively in the Spiritual Battle we are in!!!**

**Joel 3:9-10 “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, “I am strong!”**

**- We want these 4 weeks to be a “Mini Spiritual Boot Camp” for every one of us who are believers in Jesus!!!**

- We believe at the end of these 4 weeks we will all be more spiritually prepared to fight the Spiritual Battle over our marriages, our homes, our kids, our grandkids, our workplaces & our cities!!!

**Our Launch Passage is**

**Ephesians 6:10-12 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.**

**v. 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.**

- We are not without Protection from the Enemy’s Daily Attacks on us!
  - We have been given the Full Armor of God but...
  - We have to Put it on!

**So...1) What have we been given?**

**2) How do we Put it on?**

- BEING GIVEN THE MOST ADVANCED HOME SECURITY SYSTEM ILL.
  - Cameras on your Phone      - Alerts      - Sensors
  - Alarm system      - Calls the police, etc.
  - You never even turned in on when you bought the house!
- That’s the way it is for most of us in the Body of Christ!
  - We’ve been given this incredible Defense System & we don’t even know that we have it much less, how to use it!!!

v. 13 “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

v. 14a “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist...”

## **1. The Belt of Truth.**

**A. Everything we are as Christians begins & ends with Truth.**

- This is why Satan is fighting so hard to Eradicate Truth in our World today!!!
- At every turn, Absolute Truth is under Extreme Attack!

**B. So, we’ve got to know what we believe to be truth.**

- You hear us say around here all the time that, “We believe the Bible is the Inspired Word of God & the Absolute Authority for our Lives.”

**C. Without an Absolute Truth, we have nothing!**

- We are simply adrift to culture, feelings, pressure or the loudest voice.

**D. MIP: ? How well do you know the Truth of God’s Word?**

- RESOURCES FOR DEFENDING THE BIBLE
- Studying & Memorizing the Word of God everyday is not just a Helpful Idea, it is our #1 Defense Mechanism against the Attacks of the Enemy on our life!!!
- SOAP GUIDE / INTRO TO SOAP BOOK

**v. 14 “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place...”**

## **2. The Breastplate of Righteousness.**

### **A. The Difference between Right Standing & Right Living.**

- Right Standing: A Faith Issue.
- Right Living: A Works Issue.
- Right Standing: Accepting what Jesus did for us.
- Right Living: Acknowledging the Importance of what we do.

### **B. The Bible prescribes a Preferred Way of Living for us as God’s Children. (Righteousness)**

- It’s not just a “Happier, More Peaceful Life” kinda thing.
- It’s actually a Preferred way to live kind of thing!!!

### **C. There is a way God wants us to live that actually creates a BREASTPLATE of Righteousness that Protects our Heart from the Evil One!**

- We are going to dig deep into this in Week 4, don’t miss it.

### **D. MIP: ? How are you living?**

- Are you living in such a way that it is protecting your heart or exposing your heart to Schemes of the Devil???

### **E. PROVERBS 13 – 14 Ways Righteousness Affects Us!!!**

**v. 15 next...**

v. 15 “and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”

### 3. The Shoes of Peace.

A. The boots the Soldiers of NT times wore were flexible on top and almost like a cleat on the bottom to give them firm footing in rough terrain.

B. That’s what Peace has the power to do for us.

- One of the first things the enemy will attack in our lives is Peace.

- B/c if we lose our peace, it will affect every direction of our lives.

- Kids can feel it when we lack our peace.

- Spouse - Co-workers - Other parents on the bleachers.

C. Peace gets attacked from 2 directions:

1) **Externally.** – Other people & circumstances attack our peace.

- Words spoken. - Inferences.

- Real & Imagined.

2) **Internally.** – We do things that erode our peace.

- We lose our cool. - We get impatient.

- We listen to the condemning voices in our head.

D. We fight for our Peace with the Power of the Holy Spirit.

- We must fight Daily to center ourselves in the Word & in the Lord’s Presence.

### **3 Tools to Fight for Peace:**

- 1) Worship.
- 2) Forgiveness.
- 3) The Word.

v. 16-17 “In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

#### **4. The Shield of Faith.**

A. In 2 weeks...

#### **5. The Sword of the Spirit.**

A. Next Week...

#### **6. The Helmet of Salvation.**

A. We often think of Salvation as an Eternity thing... which it is & which is awesome!!

- Salvation gives us incredible Hope!
- But there are way more benefits to it than just that!!!

B. Sanctification. – “To literally be "set apart for particular use in a special purpose or work and to make holy or sacred.”

Romans 5 next...

**Romans 5:9-10** “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! <sup>10</sup> For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

**C. 3 Daily Benefits of Salvation:**

**1) Delivered from Wrath.**

- We don’t walk around under the curse or wrath of God.
- We walk around knowing that we are free in Jesus’ name!

**2) Fortified from the Enemy’s attacks.**

- Our mind is literally protected from the attacks of the devil.
- It is a Helmet!!! Of Salvation!

**3) Molded into the image of Christ.**

- This is the Ultimate Goal... to look like Christ more & more every, single day!!!

**D. MIP: ? Are you living in & walking in the Benefits of Salvation everyday?**

**Conclusion:**

**? What “Land” do you believe God wants to take you into this year?**

**- The way we will get there is through a Spiritual Battle!**

**? Which of these 4 do you need to work on & work in this week?**

**Pray**

**Fight for It – Part 3**  
**“Take Up the Shield of Faith...”**  
**April 29-30<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Intro:**

**- I’m a little sore this weekend, after 21 years of retirement, I played Softball**

***“Our jump passage for this entire series...”***

**Ephesians 6:12-18 “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.**

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

**<sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**<sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.**

**- We are in the middle of a Mini Spiritual Boot Camp where we are breaking down the “Full Armor of God.”**

**- If you missed Pts 1 or 2, go back & watch or listen.**

**- This weekend, we are going to isolate on 1 component that is so valuable & important that it demands its own week!!!**

**- & that is the “Shield of Faith.”**

v. 16 “In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”

When we think about Faith, the first question many of us ask is, “What is Faith?”

- It’s a word that’s often used, but seldom defined.
- “*Good faith estimate...*”

- *Dictionary.com* – “complete trust or confidence in someone or something.”

Here’s how the Bible defines faith...

Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

V. 6 “Without faith it’s impossible to please God.”

- In Ephesians, we are commanded to “Take up the Shield of Faith” well, we better know what it is and what that means for us!!!

### 5 Truths about The Shield of Faith:

#### 1. Faith has to be Actively “Taken Up.”

A. What good is a Shield if it just lays there beside your desk everyday?!?

- This describes so many Christians today!
  - Are we believers? Yes!
  - Are we in God’s Family? Yes!
  - Are our Sins forgiven? Yes!
  - Are we going to Heaven? Yes!

**B. But ARE WE actively Taking Up the Shield of Faith on a Daily basis? NO!!!**

**- & that means we are Spiritually exposed all the time!**

**C. MIP: We have to Make a Daily Choice to Pick it up!!!**

**- Worship – Soaking! (Spotify search “Next Level Worship Playlist)**

**- Reading God’s Word Daily.**

**- Hearing Testimonies of other’s faith.**

**- Serving others with your gifts.**

**D. We can Lift a Heavier Shield when we are Exercising!**

**- We get stronger at picking something up when we Exercise!**

**- Faith has to be Exercised!!!**

**- LIFTING WEIGHTS ILL.**

**- Some of us are asking God to increase our faith, but we are in a position of resistance to exercising that faith.**

## **2. Faith is the Ultimate Protection.**

**A. It’s called a shield – explain Roman Soldiers – Their shields were as big as doors!!!**

**- They had other people carry them to the battle lines! (Goliath)**

**B. Wood dipped in Water.      - To extinguish the flaming arrows!**

**C. MIP: Some of us can’t figure out why our “Faith Shield” is weakened so quickly, it’s b/c we’re not dipping it daily in water!!!**

**- We are going into battle with a Dry Shield!**

**- And so all the devil has to do is fire 1 arrow, & we are out!**

## **D. INTERCESSORY PRAYER SHIELD OVER SARAH & MWK**

- If that's you... email [info@nextlevelchurch.com](mailto:info@nextlevelchurch.com)

### **3. Faith can be Grown.**

#### **A. Jesus talked about:**

1) Mustard seed size faith.

2) "No greater faith in Israel..."

- So apparently Faith is in us in various sizes!

#### **B. Satan is out to shrink our faith by accusing us any way he can.**

**C. Faith is the remedy for when we Doubt God, have Fear attack, start believing Lies & Condemning ourselves.**

- It protects our Peace of Mind & heart.

**D. Faith reminds us that though Fulfillment of God's Word may not have come to pass yet, God's Word is still true & it will come to pass!**

- **ROADSIGNS ON A HIGHWAY ILL.**

- We aren't there yet, but we are closer than we were.

- When we don't see a sign for a long time, we start to **DOUBT!**

**E. Paul says there is a Spiritual Gift of Faith!**

- **Supernatural Confidence for God to do the Miraculous!**

#### **4. Faith gets stronger when we get together.**

- A. They would fight & advance by putting their shields together!!!**
- B. MIP: This is why it's so important to not be a Christian Alone!**
  - Watching Online IS NOT the same!**
- C. Being in a Group! On a Serve Team.**
  - WATCHING FAITH RISE IN OUR FREEDOM GROUPS ILL.**
  - People serving together have greater faith for each other!**
- D. God is restoring Community to our Church!!!**
  - We lost it for a while, but I'm telling you, it's coming back!!!**
  - The greater the community, the greater the faith of God's People!**

#### **5. Faith gives us Hope.**

Read Hebrews 11:1 again...

**Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."**

**Challenge: Some of you need to grow your Shield of Faith!**

- God wants to do that right now for each of us!!!**
- I believe God is going to give us the Supernatural Spiritual Gift of Faith...**
  - Some for a circumstance you're facing.**
  - Some forever!!!**
    - I'm believing God to have that impartation this weekend.**

**SALVATION – You've never put your Faith in Jesus Christ as Savior...**

**Fight for It – Part 4**  
**“Breastplate of Righteousness / Guard your Heart...”**  
**May 5-6<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Hutch Announcement**

**Intro:**

**- Don't miss Mother's Day!**

**- We're going to do something we've never done before!!!**

**- This is the final installment of “Fight for it!”**

**- 4 weeks ago, we began with this verse:**

**Joel 3:9-10 “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, “I am strong!”**

**- Prepare for War... that's what we're doing!**

**- We've been talking about putting on the “Full Armor of God!”**

**- Let's see if we can do it!!!**

**1) Belt of Truth**

**2) Breastplate of Righteousness.**

**3) Shoes of peace.**

**4) Helmet of Salvation.**

**5) Shield of Faith.**

**6) Sword of the Spirit.**

**- This weekend, I feel compelled to share with you 1 aspect about “the Breastplate of Righteousness” that I think matters a lot.**

**Ephesians 6:14** “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place...”

- The Breastplate was there to Protect our heart, but in OT times, it was symbolic of so much more...
- I'm getting ahead of myself... first, let's review...

### **5 Truths about our Heart:**

#### **1. Righteousness has to do with Right Standing AND Right Decision Making.**

##### **A. Right Standing vs. Right Living Stuff again.**

- The Difference between Right Standing & Right Living.
  - Right Standing: A Faith Issue.
  - Right Living: A Works Issue.
  - Right Standing: Accepting what Jesus did for us.
  - Right Living: Acknowledging the Importance of what we do.

**Philippians 3:8-9** “What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”

- We have Right Standing through Jesus Christ. Period.

##### **B. But there is a Righteousness that has to do with our works.**

**- There is a way God wants us to live that actually creates a BREASTPLATE of Righteousness that Protects our Heart from the Evil One!**

## **2. Our Decisions flow from our heart.**

**- That's why we are commanded to Guard our Hearts.**

**Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”**

**- There is a factor that affects our decision making from our hearts...**

**- Moses is describing the Priestly garment that should be worn & in that description, he says...**

**Exodus 28:15 “Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions—the work of skilled hands. Make it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen.”**

**v. 21 “There are to be twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.”**

**v. 29 “Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the Lord.**

## **3. Every one of us have names written on our hearts.**

**A. The names on our heart affect our decisions on a daily basis.**

**B. Every time Aaron went into the presence of God he took with him those names over his heart & they impacted the decisions he made.**

**- The same is true with us.**

#### **4. Those names affect who we have become up to this point.**

**A. We are who we are because of the names that exist on our heart.**

**- This is good news & bad news to every one of us.**

**1) We all have some names that we wish weren't there.**

**2) We all have some names that we are glad are there!**

**B. MWK ILL.**

**1) I've got some names that I'm so glad are there.**

**- A few of my names...**

**- John Maxwell – How to Lead.**

**- Chris Hodges – How to Pastor.**

**- Andy Stanley – How to Teach.**

**- Wess Stafford – How to Love Unconditionally.**

**- Sarah Keller – How to Extend Grace.**

**- Dad – How to Work.**

**- Mom – How to Create.**

**- The list goes on & on...**

**2) I've got some names that I wish weren't there.**

**- I'm NOT gonna show pictures up here for these people!!!**

**- MIP: ? Who's on your lists?**

**\* We don't just have names of People, we have Labels that were put ON US BY people as well.**

**- CHALKBOARD – RIGHT HERE...**

**- Some of us were told we were *stupid, ugly, dumb, a mistake, not talented, no good, failure, unwanted*, or any of 100 other horrible things that just aren't true!!!**

**D. Those names have been etched into the breastplate of our decision making.**

**5. The names on our heart can be erased & replaced in Jesus' name.**

**A. Some of us need some new names written over our hearts today!**

**B. I believe God's gonna do that right now.**

**- It's time to let the Holy Spirit scrub the names off of our hearts & write some new ones on there!**

**WORSHIP TEAM COMES BACK – EXPERIENTIAL TIME AT THE END**