

LESSONS FROM A BOAR

One of the finest embryo heifers you would ever want to see, with a great pedigree too. Just eight days old, running with her mama late one afternoon, kicking up her heels the way a vibrant, healthy young calf would do. What a beautiful sight! The next morning at daylight, everything had changed. This fine young heifer was now dead having been attacked and eaten by a pack of coyotes.

In the days that followed, Jack or I would often see one or more coyotes in the pasture hungry for the flesh of another helpless calf. So occasionally, we would carry guns in our trucks so that we would be ready when we saw them. Well, the days we saw the coyotes were the days we did not have our guns with us. We were not ready for battle every day.

Dr. David Jeremiah recently wrote a devotional that reminded me of this instance. The devotional was entitled: 'Sharpen Your Weapons' and it told this story: "A wild boar stood under a tree and rubbed his tusks against the trunk. A fox passing by asked him why he was doing this when there was no danger from either hunters or hounds. He replied: 'I do it intentionally; for it would not be wise to have to sharpen my weapons just at the time I ought to be using them.'" What a profound lesson.

Last month, I wrote about putting on the full armor of God as discussed in Ephesians 6: The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, and prayer. This armor is to protect us as we face and fight all the enemies and battles of life.

The only offensive component of the armor is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Everything else is to help protect us from the attacks of the enemy, but only the sword helps us to actually fight and defeat the enemy.

Hebrews 4:12-13 says: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Wow, what a mighty weapon! Not only does it help us to know and defeat our outward enemies, but it also helps us to know ourselves, our vulnerabilities, motives, thoughts and sinfulness. It shows us our need for forgiveness and our need for God. We can use it to fight and defeat the enemies that attack us from within and those that attack us outwardly. The Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit, is both a surgeon's scalpel and a lethal weapon!

I have found that the inward battles have to be fought before we can be ready to withstand the outward attacks. These inward battles often rage more frequently and intensely than the outward attacks, therefore success requires a constant, daily taking up of the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and allowing Him to do the much needed surgery in our hearts and minds, allowing Him to skillfully diagnose and remove all of the spiritual cancers that are within. Only then are we ready to face the outward attacks of the enemy. Spending time daily praying and reading God's word, hiding it in our hearts and putting it into practice, allows the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through our lives. This is sharpening your weapon.

God's Word is Truth! How do we know that? It is truth because it is based on THE Truth who is Jesus the Christ. John 1:1 says referring to Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were

made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.” In John 14:6 Jesus said: ‘I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

Faith in Jesus is the belt of truth (referring back to the armor of God) that holds all the other armor in place. It is the foundation on which Christianity and salvation exists. Without faith in Jesus alone for our salvation, the forgiveness of our sin, and eternal life, the rest of the armor is not only ineffective, but it is unavailable to us—leaving us totally vulnerable and a sure prey of the enemy. Just like the young calf, without protective armor and without any weapon, we have no way of defending ourselves from a powerful and vicious enemy who wants only to kill and devour us in every way, in every aspect of our lives: physically, emotionally, relationally, culturally, and most significantly, spiritually.

So what can we do? What will we do? The battles of life are raging—the war is spiritual not physical, but it does require physical, emotional and spiritual strength and endurance. The battle is so fierce that it requires both spiritual defensive armor and spiritual offensive weapons to survive the attacks and win the war. There is an enemy called Satan who’s only desire is to defeat you in every way. But there is a God who loves you so much that He sent His only Son Jesus to shed His blood and give his life, paying the price for your sin, so that the victory can be yours and mine. In John 10:10 Jesus says the thief (speaking of Satan), comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy, but I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly.

If we ignore or reject Jesus, Satan wins the war. He owns our soul. All he has to do is keep us from trusting and following Jesus and he will have won the only battle that has eternal significance. But Jesus made a way for us to be victorious over Satan’s grip. He paid the price for our sin to be forgiven when He gave up His life, and through His resurrection, He not only defeated death, but He defeated Satan and made a way for us to be victorious over our greatest enemy.

Yes, spiritual warfare is raging in everyone’s life. The battle is for your soul. The war is spiritual not physical. We will all die physically, however, the choice of whether or not we remain dead spiritually is totally up to us. Call out to Jesus and accept His forgiveness and eternal life. Turn away from your sin. Pick up the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, study it and apply it to your life each day. Allow the Holy Spirit to do the necessary surgery in your heart and mind and then stand on God’s Word every day ready to face and defeat the attacks of the enemy.