

Strong in the Lord and in the power of His might

Do you remember Peter Sellers in "The Party"?

Well sometimes I think that we as Christians see ourselves like this...getting blasted by the devil BUT we arise...yet again...to weakly blow our trumpet. We refuse to give in.

The problem that I have with this picture is that the Christian seems to be struggling to remain upright and is constantly defending and the demons seem to have the upper hand and are constantly attacking.

It gives the impression that demons were not defeated BUT THEY WERE!

It gives the impression that Christians have no authority BUT THEY DO!

Are there trials and tribulations? A loud resounding YES!

Do we have the victory? YES! However, it doesn't always come packaged the way that we expect.

Was Jesus the Messiah? YES! Did He come as the conquering King...?

YES! He just wasn't packaged the way that they expected but in fact the victory that He came to achieve all by Himself was far, far, FAR greater than anybody understood... at first.

They expected Him to deliver them from Rome...one single enemy.

He came to deliver not just them but the entire world from the unseen enemy that was controlling the whole world!

The unseen enemy however, had been waiting for millennia for the One who would crush his head and when One appeared that fit the bill, he scrambled to try and SNUFF HIM OUT!

The image conscious and power hungry religious leaders were motivated by a spirit of jealousy and pride (now, where have we seen that before?) to try and eliminate what Jesus was preaching and demonstrating, mainly, that "The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand"...in fact in their midst.

Seemingly, they succeeded...and with His death they thought His message was too...but they couldn't have been more wrong. The victory He had come to achieve was completely successful.

A number of years later, Stephen, a man full of the Spirit, was preaching that "The Kingdom of heaven was at hand" and he did great wonders and signs among the people and when certain men who tried to dispute with Stephen failed, they stirred up the people, seized him and brought him before the council. The council looked at him and saw the face of an angel but upon hearing his discourse they were cut to the heart and they gnashed their teeth at him.

Stephen being filled with the Spirit looked up and saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. They took him and cast him out of the city and stoned him to death. Just before he died, Stephen knelt down and asked God not to charge them with this sin. He was strong in the Lord and the power of His might. A young man stood by watching and his name was Paul.

Fast forward now to the life of the Apostle Paul. Full of the Spirit, he has been travelling far and wide, and he too, has been proclaiming and demonstrating that "the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand" and now Paul becomes a threat to the defeated unseen enemy who uses the same means to stir up religious leaders of Paul's day.

Paul finds himself imprisoned in Rome for 2 years. Seemingly, the leaders succeeded in spreading the gospel but... did they?

It was during this time that Paul wrote the four epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon). It also gave Paul the opportunity and the time to preach "The Kingdom of God" and to teach all things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ to all those who came to hear him. (Acts 28:30-31). Paul was strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

Today Christians worldwide are being trained by the Holy Spirit using the epistles that Paul wrote!

At that time, they never realized that all of Rome would be impacted by those who came to Christ through the ministry of a prisoner...a prisoner of the gospel.

Years later, Christians became a threat to those in Rome and so ONCE AGAIN a defeated unseen enemy does all he can to destroy these Christians.

Many early Christians were persecuted, tortured and sentenced to terrible deaths. The Colosseum became synonymous with the Christian Martyrs who died in its bloody arena. These Martyrs would sing songs of worship as they died. The Kingdom of heaven was at hand and they were strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

Seemingly, however, the power of Rome succeeded in crushing Christianity...BUT Today, the power of Rome is no more. The once popular Colosseum is nothing but a ruin and hanging in the place where the Roman Emperors sat, hangs a Cross – a powerful tribute to a seemingly lowly carpenter who never even came to Rome. The gospel of the Kingdom continues to be preached all over the world. NOTHING can stop the victory of Christ!

What does that mean to you and I?

It's our turn...to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

No matter what is coming your way as long as you understand that nothing can stop the plan of God then you too will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9.

The answer lies not in ourselves, but in a divine and unbeatable defence: the armour of God.

Ephesians 6:10-20 starts off like this...

Be strong in the Lord and in power of His might! (How do I do that?) By putting on the full armour of God (why?) that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (the unseen, **defeated** foe).

Everything that happened in these lives came because of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The devil tried to stop them from living in and experiencing the dominion of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God has come though and nothing can stop The King from having His full impact on your life!

Ephesians goes on to say: We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

By far, the greatest attacks that we all face is through flesh and blood...SEEMINGLY!

Do not ENGAGE! Do not even let your emotions get involved! **INSTEAD, ask yourself what is the devil trying to do with this situation?** Take every thought captive AND PRAY! Not for retribution...pray for salvation for the very ones that the devil wants to use.

They are simply pawns that the devil is using to get to you! If you simply react...you lose!

Secondly, do not spread the message, tell the story or share your anger, disgust or whatever! The bible says, "You shall declare a thing and it shall be established". What then? Well what does the Word say?

Stand therefore, (how?) having girded your waist with truth, (guard your heart and do not sin) having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all take the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation (take authority over what thoughts you dwell on...only dwell on the Truth of the Word) and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication IN THE SPIRIT, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.