

IDENTITY – Your Role in His Kingdom

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MAIN VERSES

[Exodus 3:13-15](#) • [Exodus 23:20, Exodus 23:27](#) • [Deuteronomy 20:1-4](#) • [Deuteronomy 30:11-20](#) • [Isaiah 36:4-5](#) • [Isaiah 55:11](#) • [Jeremiah 18](#) • [Matthew 18:18](#) • [2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#) • [Ephesians 2:1-8](#) • [Galatians 2:20](#) • [Philippians 2:5-11](#) • [Colossians 1:9-14](#) • [Acts 4:12](#) • [Numbers 10:35](#)

Welcome Home

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home. But please join me in welcoming to the stage Mr. Dan Bush.

Thank you. We set all this stuff down. Good morning, everybody. Like Pete said, some of y'all know me, some of y'all don't. For the ones who don't, welcome. Thanks, everybody, for being here. For those of you who do, your first question is probably, how did the drummer get a microphone? That's usually rule number one, but I think Matt talked about it in his Revelation study. It was like the eighth bowl judgment or something like that. So we're getting close, folks.

Lessons from the Service

So I wanted to spend some time today talking about some things the Lord has been working into my spirit. But I'm always thankful for how the Lord puts things together, how he facilitates things. The worship team this morning, the song selections, and the way he was moving is amazing. And the Torah portion this morning was absolutely the same. The Lord works all things together for the good of those who love him.

A little bit about myself. So about four years after I got out of high school, that first four years I spent in the military, my desire was to go in for 20 years as a career, become an officer. But in that first four years, I realized I was not going to be able to get my college in, so I just spent that as an enlisted person. And then I got out of active duty and went to college. And shortly after

coming off of active duty, I became a believer. The Lord showed me through that process I was probably going to be a better architect than soldier. And I'm thankful for his honesty in that.

But recently, the Lord has been bringing some lessons that I learned as a soldier back to my mind and drawing some parallels between that experience and my life as a believer. And some of those seem to be pretty profound. Some of those seem to be kind of surface, but as he worked it into me, I felt like there was really some things there that could be of benefit to the body. And so recently Matt asked me to speak, and so this is that time.

It Is Not About Me

The first thing that we learn in the Army is it is not about me. Every soldier starts their service the same way. You get a haircut, you get some new clothes with your last name sewn on it. Your entire identity is reduced down to a piece of metal. Basically, it's got your last name, then your first name, then your social security number, so they can identify you, your blood type, so maybe they can do something for you if you're injured, and then your religious affiliation in case they can't. But your entire identity is stripped away. Everything about you as a civilian is reduced down, stripped away, and converted.

Over a short period of time, everything about you, from your haircut down to the way you dress, is reduced and replaced with the uniform appearance of the branch of service you joined.

Basic Training for the Kingdom

Basic training comes next. Now, the purpose of basic training is important and necessary. It's to transition folks who are used to being self-sufficient, acting on their own and taking care of themselves into functioning members of a much larger organization that has its own traditions, regulations, rites of passage, even its own culture. You are challenged mentally, physically, and emotionally. Everything that you thought you knew about yourself is put to the test. Everything in basic is geared to equip you with the fundamental skills necessary to fulfill your job as a soldier and to facilitate a shift in your identity.

This shift in identity is necessary and critical, as I said. While not everyone has the desire or the ability to join the military, God has created each of us with the capacity and desire from birth, from creation, to be in relationship with him. While not all will become members of the kingdom, God's desire and intent is clear. He says in [Ephesians 2](#), 1 through 8, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now in work in the sons of

disobedience. Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved through faith. Verse 1. Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Yes.

Depending on your view of predestination, some biblical humor here, you can decide if you were drafted or you were involuntary, but either way, you're in the kingdom.

My Moment

Now, last time when Pete spoke, the title of his message was From Moment to Mission. In it, he did an amazing job of communicating the importance of a believer moving beyond that initial salvation experience into the fullness of the calling God created for them. Until we as believers move into that understanding that we are a part of a kingdom and not a Lone Ranger, the impact that we were created for will be stunted and limited.

My moment came in January 1986, as I said, just a few months after leaving the service. Now, for about eight months prior to that, I had come back from Germany and was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, about just a few hours from Atlanta where my dad and stepmom lived. And I was able to reconnect with them on the weekends. I'd been out of relationship with them for several years. And in that process, even now, I can see how the Lord was renewing and restoring and redeeming relationships. So I would go to Atlanta on the weekends.

Well, it so happens at this time that my stepmom discovered that she had cancer on her tongue. The prognosis was not good. They said she would probably end up losing most of her tongue. At that time... The surgery was such that they couldn't really target things, so they had to take out more than they thought just to make sure it was all taken care of.

One day at lunch, I was talking to her and asking her if she was scared about the surgery and the impacts. And what she said stunned me. I was not a believer at this time, but she said she had committed to the Lord that whether she had a tongue or not, she would continue to praise him. As a non-believer, this was confusing and amazing. What was this strength that she had and where did that come from to allow her to say such a thing? Having been in the army and facing the potential for death and all those kinds of things, injury, this was very different. This was very different to me. It was something the Lord struck me with.

My stepmom understands that worship is first a physical act, a spiritual act, and then a physical one. It comes from the inside. It comes from the Lord first and then flows back to Him. It was this conversation that the Lord used just a few months later to move me to ask a local pastor where this faith came from and to eventually ask Yeshua to be my Savior for which I'm eternally grateful.

From Moment to Mission

Now if you had asked me at that time what I believed... Did I believe the whole Bible was true? Did I really know the Bible? Did Adam have a belly button? Whatever. I would have said, I don't know. I just know that God has called my name and I've given my life to Jesus. This was my moment, as Pete called it.

I was fortunate enough to have a young man offer to disciple me, helping me to learn the scripture and offering me guidance when I had the inevitable questions about how to walk out this new faith walk. It was a spiritual boot camp helping me to understand both the invisible identity chains that came as part of my surrender to Yeshua and some of my responsibilities in that role. We spent a lot of time in Galatians and Ephesians and Philippians talking and learning about the fruit of the Spirit, the old man and the flesh.

But at that time, like a lot of new believers, my walk seemed to be really a test of wills. A couple years later as a student at Georgia Tech, I heard a sermon based on [Galatians 2.20](#) that shifted that perspective. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. In the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. This sermon was critical in helping me understand the concept of lordship and of the new nature given to me at salvation.

A New Identity in the Kingdom

It was the beginning of a deeper understanding of my role as a member of the kingdom and that my life was to be in service to my Savior. We are invited into this kingdom to exercise the full might of the giftings and callings we have received from creation, to bring glory to the Father in whatever manner He directs, [Jeremiah 18](#) uses the analogy of the potter and the clay to reinforce his dominion over his creation. It is his prerogative to direct how we are to be used, the challenges we face, the manner in which we live, and even how we are to die. Our lives are not our own. We belong to the Lord.

It is most critical that I as a believer recognize and internalize this fundamental truth. For apart from it, I cannot function as I was created. Christ is our example in this. [Philippians 2, 5-11](#) says, "And being found in appearance of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

One of the most profound statements I ever heard while I was in the army was the phrase, "You fight like you train." If you've been in the military, you've probably heard that or some variation of it.

Trained for the Battlefield

But it expresses simply that apart from discipline and peacetime in the routine of your day-to-day, you will not succeed on the battlefield. Military training prepares soldiers in a variety of ways—physical conditioning certainly, competency with weapons, tactics, organization, culture, traditions, and mental conditioning. Now that last item, mental conditioning, is what supports and facilitates all the other things to be effective. Many of the exercises we performed or endured were intended to stretch us to our breaking points both physically and emotionally. It was paramount that we learn to overcome our fears and natural sense of self-preservation in an atmosphere of high stress and danger. Our spiritual walk requires the same qualities. The Lord trains us. Discipline allows us to engage activities, situations, and the enemy through encounters, trials, and testings to exercise our faith and knowledge of his word. To develop in us a recognition of when he is moving and a reflexive trusting in the goodness and faithfulness of God despite what we see and sense in the physical.

Every Believer a Warrior

[2 Corinthians 10-4](#) says. So, an interesting fact—unlike all the other branches of the military, the Marines are kind of unique. They have their own culture. But one of the things that is unique about them especially is that every Marine is first trained to be a rifleman, a member of a small unit, able to operate in small unit tactics. Then later on, they're trained to be a cook or a radio guy or communications or intelligence or a pilot or whatever else. At any point, a Marine cook or a pilot can drop what they're doing and wield a rifle effectively. As believers, we are all equipped from creation to be worshipers—with weapons effective for the battles we will face: praise, prayer, and the word of our testimony. We are all worshipers. It's not just the people on the platform. We all have a part.

Prayer, Praise, and Testimony

The pressure of testing and the pain that we see around us and in our situations drives us to prayer, acknowledging our dependence on the Lord, our God, and his ability and desire and willingness to work on our behalf. Our praise speaks our agreement into the atmosphere that our God is all that he says he is and that he will do what he says. The outflow from that experience becomes our testimony, a word given to us not only to strengthen us, but to encourage others and provide witness of our God. Our usefulness to the kingdom grows through our experiences with the Lord.

Obedience in the Ordinary

Look at Noah. In [Genesis 6](#), 18 and following through 7, 10—it says, "Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten and stored up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." Noah did this. He did all that God commanded him. Important language, right? We see that same language used with Moses over and over and over again. He did everything the Lord commanded him. We see Noah commanded to prepare the ark and to bring in a pair of animals, followed by the statement: Noah did this. He did all that God commanded him. He obeyed. We must train ourselves to hear and obey, to shema. We must believe God when he speaks and then act on it. His words are not casual. Every word that comes from the mouth of God is useful and important.

Notice that after this initial account, we see that Noah is now given instructions related to the clean animals, the ones that will be used for sacrifice. [Genesis 7](#), 1-10: "Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. I have acknowledged your obedience. Take with you seven pair of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that were not clean, the male and his mate, and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth, forty days and forty nights. And every living thing that I've made, I will blot out from the face of the ground. And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.'"

His obedience in handling the ordinary things brought opportunity for bigger, more holy things.

Operating in Both Realms

My effectiveness as a believer grows proportional to how well I learn to hear and to use the weapons given to me in operating simultaneously in both the physical and the spiritual worlds.

Let's talk about that for just a second. The physical world reflects the spiritual world. The Lord declares in [Isaiah 55](#), 11, "So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth." In [Genesis 1-3](#), we see God speaking to the universe and it responding in emphatic activity. Adam and Eve were created for the garden environment, placed there. The garden was designed and equipped to complement and support them in their role as caretakers. Once sin entered the picture, creation had to change to reflect the new reality of a sin nature and the break with God. His words in chapter 3 are as much for the creation as they were for the serpent, Adam, and Eve. The world changed because God spoke.

Perhaps you've heard the example of circumcision. The Lord introduced circumcision in the Bible through Abraham in [Genesis 17](#), commanding that it be performed on the eighth day of a child's life. Modern medicine has confirmed that up until the eighth day, the child's body is not capable of handling cuts. It can't blot and clot blood. Until the eighth day, there is not the capacity for that body to handle such a procedure. Now, whether this chemical ability came about when God spoke that to Abraham or whether he had already placed it into action, the fact is that God's words went forth and his creation responds obediently. The promises and commands of the Lord carry authority when spoken into our situations and circumstances.

Words Carry Weight

Yeshua told His disciples in [Matthew 18](#), 18, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Our words carry great weight." Not our words, not our desires, but when we repeat and acknowledge and agree with God's words. "With Him we reject the enemy's work in our lives. We declare the glory and goodness of God. We acknowledge our dependence on Him and Him alone." This is not a name-and-claim-it approach, but a reciting of what God himself has said and promised.

Now, several weeks ago, Matt taught a lesson centering around the story of Hezekiah and how in Hezekiah's pride and in his fear, he relied on physical acts and physical weapons to prepare for an impending attack from Assyria instead of seeking the Lord's instructions. [Isaiah 36](#) records the coming of the Assyrian representative to the Israelites. [Isaiah 36](#), 4 through 5: "And the Assyrian representative said to them, 'Say to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust?'"

Knowing Your Enemy

The enemy comes at us with fear-inducing threats and physical manifestations of great power intended to change our focus and compel us to act in our own strength when all along we do have words that are strategy and power for war. In the physical realm, officers spend years studying past military leaders in the battles that they fought to not only learn the tactics and the strategies, but also how to avoid the mistakes that were made. Many battles are won or lost due solely to the character and personality of the commanders. Pride leads to blindness. Meekness leads to lost opportunities. In the movie Patton, as an example, we see the general constantly talking about his fellow and opposing force commanders in terms of their character and personalities as it relates to the plan of battle.

The Enemy's Character

As believers, we must study our enemy. We must know our enemy. We must know his character. His character reflects how he operates. His character is that of a liar and a thief and a murderer. He was created to be in God's presence. Some versions of the Bible suggest he was a musician in God's court. As a former attendee in the Lord's presence, he knows the strategic power and purpose of prayer and worship. In his hatred of humanity, he attacks any and all who dare to wield them. Now, he hates us because we, unlike him, have the opportunity and capacity to be restored to relationship and fellowship with God for eternity. He no longer has the privilege of operating as he was created to be a worshiper. It's our job. He hates us for it. We must know his character so we recognize, in the attacks, where they're coming from and what the purpose is.

The Enemy's Strategy

He operates by continually seeding the battlefield with confusion, fear, despair, and hatred. His lies constantly minimize and demean the need for God in our lives. How many of these phrases have you heard in your life? "All gods are the same. God doesn't exist. I don't need God. God is dead. God didn't show up for me. God made a mistake when he created me. Therefore, he must not be a very good God." Satan wants to focus our attention on what we see and feel rather than what we know. He attacks what God has provided in an attempt to cause us to doubt God's faithfulness—his ability to do what he says he will do.

The Cost of Wounds

Like a nuclear bomb, the enemy's 4D attacks can be far-reaching and cause damage well beyond the immediate target. Through a child or a youth in our church, Satan can impact not only the

child personally, but he impacts their family. He impacts the youth group, and therefore he impacts all the families of the youth. He then impacts the entire congregation. One target, and he takes care of multiple, multiple people. In our training, we were taught that while not every shot we made would result in a death, to be blunt, a wounded opponent was often just as good and maybe even better. The harsh reality is that when you wound somebody on the battlefield, it'll take two other people to take care of them to get them off the battlefield. So now instead of one, you've taken out three.

Standing in Our God-Given Identity

Satan knows this, and while he would certainly love to take all of us out at once, a lot of times he shoots to wound because he knows he can take out whole groups with a single attack. By standing in the truth of our God-given identity, we can identify and defeat the lies and fear of the enemy. We have been given the privilege of becoming image bearers of the Most High God, and as such, we must be disciplined, steadfast, and alert in our daily walk, ready to identify the enemy's schemes.

Now, I keep talking about identity. For a soldier, the shift in identification, as I said, from civilian to soldier is an absolute necessity. Without it, a soldier would often just prioritize their own well-being, what's important to them, their desires, their goals, instead of what is needed by the group to accomplish the mission.

The Soldier's Identification

I saw a story recently which I hadn't heard before, but I think it exemplifies that. In 1991, as the military was gearing up to go into Kuwait to remove Saddam Hussein, the army started activating units, both regular army and National Guard and reserve units. A lot of units were sent to specific bases to do preparation training, paperwork, make sure your will's in order, that kind of stuff. And then they would move on to advanced training and then finally be deployed.

One such unit, a National Guard unit, was sent to Fort Hood, Texas for about six weeks to get ready. After this initial training, they would move to Fort Irwin, California for some intense desert training and then off to Saudi Arabia or wherever it was that they were going to be deployed from. While they were at Fort Hood, about 70 out of 110 soldiers in this particular unit decided they had enough. They decided to go AWOL. They were given a two-day weekend pass, and they decided to stretch that out a little bit. They went to Shreveport and found a TV station that was willing to talk to them, and they got on the air and started airing their

grievances. It's too hot. It's too muddy. I don't like the food. I don't like getting yelled at. We don't get enough time off.

Now, these are all soldiers in a volunteer army. They all signed up for this, and then they're in their final training before they go to war. There seemed to be something missing there in how they identified their job.

The result of this is what is most interesting. By the time the soldiers all returned to Fort Hood and they implemented the discipline process, the unit overstayed their time at Fort Hood, and because of that, they missed their slot at Fort Irwin. They couldn't go to their final training at Fort Irwin to be ready to deploy. And as a result, the Army declared them non-deployable. So an entire Army division was made non-deployable by 70 individuals who chose to put their focus somewhere other than where it should have been. And as a result, that had far-reaching impacts. Now, at the end of the day, the operation was successful, but the implications of that were pretty significant.

Our Defense: Knowing Who We Are

We hear that word all the time now: His thumbprints are all over this. By attacking our God-given identity, both physical and spiritual, the enemy disrupts and can even rupture the most foundational part of our existence and throw us mentally and emotionally into a void. By convincing somebody that they were a mistake, it undermines God's character as the loving, holy, divine, all-knowing, and perfect Father He is and tears the bonds of trust and relationship with those perceived to have perpetuated the mistake. A lot of times, parents and family members.

Our defense is to know who we are so that we will be secure in our identity, operating with a steadfast heart, unwilling to bend to the lies of the enemy. Our mission, as Pete said when he spoke, is to follow and live under his reign as an image-bearing partner of him. Just as the uniform of a soldier reflects the traditions, culture, and ideals of a particular organization, our spiritual identity should properly reflect the kingdom and the God we claim to belong to.

[Exodus 3:13–15](#) says, "God also said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel. The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."

[Acts 4:12](#) says only Jesus has the power to save. His name is the only one in all the world that can save us. Our identity is clear. Everything we have, are, and can do comes from the Father through Yeshua, empowered by the Spirit.

That verse from Exodus speaks of heritage. He first identifies himself with their ancestors. He talks about it historically in the present, and he speaks about it prophetically. He covers the spectrum. He says, this is who I am. He reminds them that the God of Abraham, that he is the God of Abraham that spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they knew about. He says, I am coming to you now. And then he says, this is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations, which includes ours. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And I declare that I remember your name, Father. And I will teach it to my children. Everything we have, are, and do—I'm going to say it again—comes from the Father through Yeshua, empowered by the Spirit.

When we turn our lives over to Yeshua, our identity is changed and we are given a new life with the power to live for Christ alone. [Colossians 1:9–14](#) says, "According to his glorious power, for all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of his Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." And [2 Corinthians 10:3–5](#) says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ."

Preparing for Battle

When I was in Germany, our base was only 45 miles from the East German border, so pretty close. We knew at that time that attack could come at any moment. We often had drills at all hours of the day and night, 2 a.m., that kind of stuff, to prepare us to act quickly and decisively, to do what we knew needed to be done, to get to the border quickly and be prepared for the impending attack.

Have you ever heard the verse or the saying, you don't always get to choose your battles, only how you fight them? The same is true in our spiritual lives. Attacks can come anytime and from anywhere. Last week, Katie made the statement, battles are coming. And I'm sure that I'm not the only one who can testify that there are indeed battles raging right now. The point of her statement was to remind us that we should not be surprised when the enemy rises up to attack your territory.

I love that the Lord gave us a preemptive weapon to use every day to acknowledge his preeminence. We rise and we say, agree with the Lord in [Numbers 10:35](#). "And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, arise, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered. And let those who hate you flee from before you."

The Certainty of Conflict

The Lord does not mince words about the certainty of conflict. [Deuteronomy 20:1–4](#) says, "And when you draw near to the battle, the priest shall come forth and speak to the people and shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for battle against your enemies. Let not your heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them, for the Lord your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory." The Lord does not go to the battlefield to surrender. He goes for victory.

Matt's Revelation series went into great detail on how the Lord fights not with worldly weapons, and he expects us and trains us to fight with spiritual weapons. Love, the word, faith.

When the Lord was laying out his battle plan to Moses regarding the taking of the promised land, he said that he would go ahead of them and prepare the battlefields. [Exodus 23](#), starting in verse 20: "Then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. Starting in verse 27, I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. I will send hornets before you which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, the Hittites from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you little by little. I will drive them out from before you until you have increased and possessed the land. And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

By the time the children of Israel got to Jericho, 40 years later, the enemy was in a panic. The hornets of the Lord had gone forth and won the victory before the horns were even sounded. This should be a lesson for us. Time is something only we worry about. God sees eternity spread before him and thus is able to work all things to the good of those who love him.

Joseph's Divine Timing

Think about Joseph. Christy mentioned this when she spoke. If Joseph had been released two years earlier, when the cupbearer and the baker were brought out of the prison, remember he said, "Don't forget me, get me out of this place." But he did forget. But if Joseph hadn't been forgotten, had come out two years earlier, what would he have been? He would have been a slave. Just nobody in the land of Egypt. Two years later, and God has prepared the battlefield, so to speak, and Joseph steps out of prison into his divine appointment as what can only be called the savior of the known world, second in command only to Potiphar or to Pharaoh.

Changing Your Allegiance

Time is only something we worry about. Remember, as soon as you became a member of the kingdom of God, our uniform changed. So did the banner that we serve under. That makes you a target. You've gone AWOL from the enemy's camp, and you've joined the other side. The Lord alone knows and sees all things, and because of that, he alone knows what's going on in the spiritual, why the conflict is happening, what the enemy's strategies and tactics are, and what our response is to be.

When the Enemy Attacks

There comes a time when the enemy has attacked your territory, and he's pressing hard, taking ground and holding it. The attack is manifesting in the physical through fear, pain, doubt, anger, health. The target may be your children. It may be your health. It may be your finances. Whatever it is, the pressure is real and intense, and your faith is being challenged. Like Job, you hear voices around you encouraging you to yield to wisdom and do something that you know is counter to what the Spirit is telling you, to what the Lord has said. They tell you to do something, to retreat, to go AWOL, to change the situation.

Now, I'm not talking about a test from the Lord. This is clearly an attack from the enemy intended to rob you of your heritage, to reduce or destroy your faith or damage and destroy those that you love. At these toughest, lowest points in our lives, we have to choose to either run away or to fight. Just stop. This is the time to fall back to the stronghold. To set your mind and heart firmly on the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his word and to erect walls of praise around your position. It is time to ask and receive from the Lord His battle plan, His strategies and tactics through prayer and praise and specific words for the situation at hand. Who does God say He is? What has He told you? What has God promised you? Who do you belong to and what is your identity?

The Stronghold as Strategic Defense

Now, I say stronghold. We've read several verses this morning that use that word and they're always in the negative related to the enemy. But the concept of a stronghold is a defensive position used to hold territory to deny it to the enemy. The stronghold is a place to make a stand for something worth fighting for. While we typically think of it in the negative, right, we have to realize that this is a strategic weapon available to us.

Inside the stronghold is not the safest place to be. After all, you are a target in the middle of a battlefield. You are holding something that the enemy wants and standing firm. But you stand in the protection and presence of your banner and shield. In occupying this stronghold, this place of stronghold, you acknowledge that God is the only one who can see you through to the victory. To be blunt, there's two ways out of the stronghold. You're either victorious or you're in a body bag. That's it. You take your position and you stand firm.

The Commitment of the Stronghold

To take up the stronghold means I will regard God's reputation above my own. As a member of his kingdom, everything I have is his. My reputation, my family, my finances, my very life comes from him and is to be used as he directs. I will agree with God that what he has said is right and true regardless of the situation I find myself in. I will choose to stand firm in the commitments and choices I have made despite what others say or do. And finally, I will commit to stand firm until I see the victory of God.

The Choice Before You

Deuteronomy 30:11 through 20 says: "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us that we may hear and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near to you. It is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it."

"But if your heart turns away and you will not hear but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you were going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life. Amen."

Learning Through Combat

So in 1983, there was an operation on the island of Grenada to try to rescue some students that were there. And the army sent quite a few soldiers down there. And after that operation was over with, the first thing the Army did was take a large percentage of those veterans of that operation and disperse them throughout the world to frontline units like the one I was serving in Germany. The purpose of that was that the practical experience that they had learned in combat in that situation, in that operation, could be shared with us, could be transferred and learned from. The stories that I heard were not pleasant, but they were necessary for us to understand the skills and the tactics and the disciplines that we needed, that were needed to be successful in that situation so that we could apply it to ours.

Your Testimony Is Not Just For You

For me personally, a large part of my spiritual development came as the Lord showed me that the circumstances and challenges in my life and the life of my family may not primarily be for my benefit. Imagine that. But for someone else who needs the testimony that I'm going to have. Christy has spoken before about the difference between the why and the what. By asking what, the focus shifts off ourselves and on what God is wanting to do through us and in our situation. By saying what, we agree with God that hard times are opportunities for service to others.

Maybe losing a job and then your house doesn't seem like a reason to raise a hallelujah. But in God's economy, it becomes an opportunity for increased faith in his provision and then an opportunity to share with others who are going through the same thing or something similar. Losing a child through miscarriage is tragic. But what if that brings you into contact with people who need to know about the Lord more? Almost losing your tongue to cancer certainly wasn't on my stepmom's New Year's resolution list. But for me personally, her faith through that challenge demonstrated to me that there was something beyond myself and allowed me to be in a place where I could hear when God called my name. I am eternally grateful for that opportunity.

Standing in the Gap

Hardship plus faith plus God equals testimony. Sometimes the battles we're called to fight are not about us, right? Not the outcome. It's the actual battle itself. You step onto the battlefield to stand in the gap for someone else who can't fight for themselves. Maybe you need to stand in the gap for somebody, as we've talked about, through worship. To fight the battle for them when they can't worship because of their distance from the Father.

The Father has no limits on what he will do to reach us. It does not matter what we are up to, into, or used to. He will come for you and fight for you. Now, today, we all find ourselves in different places. Some of us are in the midst of a battle. Praise God for the testimony that is coming today. The New Testament portion of the Torah portion this week says that God loves a cheerful giver. He gives us enough for our needs and enough to share for others. And that applies to everything, not just our finances. It applies to our circumstances and our experiences too.

The Call to Return and Be Known

Somebody might have gone AWOL this morning. Well, you need to step back in. You need to step back on the battlefield and step back and realize what your identity is, and get back to doing what you need to do. And there might be somebody who has no idea what I'm talking about. Somebody online who doesn't understand, like me when my stepmom was talking, what is this all about?

So as the prayer team comes and we're getting ready to close: If you need prayer because you're in a battle, or your life is not where you know the Lord wants it to be, or you don't have a relationship with the Lord and you want one because the Lord is calling your name today, I'd ask that you come up and talk to somebody and pray with them. Today is the day. Amen.

Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity. May the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be like-minded with one another in the manner of Messiah, so that together with one voice you glorify the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. And may the Lord bless you and keep you.

Our Prayer

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up your countenance towards you and give you peace. Perfect peace. Oh, Lord, we thank you for this

time of meeting us here today, Lord God. May we take this fire, this renewed dedication, this renewed passion for you, Lord God. Lord God, may it grow in each of our hearts. May it spread this week, Lord God. Lord God, use us to further your kingdom this week, Lord God. To be light, to be salt, we pray. In Yeshua's mighty name, we pray. Amen, amen.

Shabbat shalom. Shalom.

We pray this message has blessed and encouraged you and your relationship with God. And we hope that it has made the Bible more beautiful and more powerful in its impact on your life.

Our Mission

Founded in Truth Fellowship exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives.

If this message has blessed you, or if you see God working in and through this ministry, we invite you to prayerfully consider partnering with us so that the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach all nations.

If you would like to take part in this mission, then you can do so at foundinthetruth.com slash give, or you can scan the QR code on the screen.

These offerings go toward providing resources for both our local fellowship and our online ministry, as well as our many outreach ministries, including our foster care and adoption ministry, local charity outreach ministry, our international online children's ministry, and any future ministries that the Lord would allow us to walk through and walk in to impact the world around us with His love and the love of God. The bold proclamation of the gospel of King Yeshua.

Thank You

We thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

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