

The Battle for your soul

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I have been reading books by Barbara Johnson lately concerning the battles that many American families are facing with the rise of homosexuality, drugs, violence, wars, and various problems facing our nation. Christian mothers have banded together to support each other during the crisis' that have arisen within the family structure that they are overwhelmed with. Satan has called an "all out" war against the church of Jesus Christ and there is nothing so heartbreaking to a mother then to see her children join the ranks of Satan's army. But I am here to tell you that the battle for your soul is not your own battle; it is a spiritual battle where Jesus Christ fights for us as we follow his command. Jesus came the first time as a babe born in a cow stable to humble parents who had no special training or qualifications to be parents to the Son of God. They were in the family lineage of King David and they were chosen because they were humble and obedient to God and would fulfill their obligations regardless of what it meant to their personal wellbeing. Jesus came on God's time schedule when Satan had blinded the eyes of the Jews and greed, desire for power, and manmade laws had permeated and contaminated God's people. Spiritual darkness surrounded his people and they had no leader to show them the way of holiness. There had been no prophet sent to them for over 400 years and the prophets that had been sent had been abused, killed, tortured and everything possible had been done to silence them. The blind led the blind and they all fell into the pit. Look at John 1. It reads like this: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. It continues by stating that God sent John the Baptist to bear witness of that light so that others might believe in Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus came to his own and they rejected him for they didn't recognize him for who he was. But as many as received him, he gave to them power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name. He was born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but God. The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us and we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth."

Grace is a word meaning unmerited favor of God. We can't earn it by good works and we didn't deserve it, but it is a gift of God to those who have faith in Jesus Christ and believe the truth. The Bible says that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8. Believing truth is the key to overcoming the enemy of our soul. The truth sets us free from the bondage of sin that has been passed down from our ancestors, Adam and Eve. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. The enemy of our soul seeks to destroy us and the Word of God will give us the understanding and light that we need to avoid his advances. In 1 Peter chapter 5, Peter tells us how to avoid the evil one. He

speaks to the elders in the church about the attitude and motive that they should have when dealing with the flock of God. The pastor is to be a shepherd to the flock and is to feed them the Word of God and serve as an overseer of them. It is not to be done out of a sense of duty or a feeling that we must do this, but with a willing heart as God wants us to be. Don't be greedy for money but eager to serve. We are not to be lords over the people but to serve as examples to the believers. When the Chief Shepherd appears, we will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

God has called pastors, teachers, and evangelists to a life of holiness and when that breaks down, the people go astray and lose heart. The leaders of the church of Jesus Christ must proclaim the message of salvation without fear or favor, and not look to benefit themselves with fame or fortune. We are to be the protectors of the sheep.

We are called to clothe ourselves with humility and to submit one to another. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up in due time. Cast all your cares upon him for he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power forever and ever AMEN.

This is the same Peter that Jesus talked to about Satan in Luke 22:31. Peter had been a follower of Jesus for 3 ½ years. As the time drew near for Jesus to suffer at the hands of evil men he prepared his disciples for that time of upheaval and trouble. He had just served the last Passover with his disciples, had washed their feet as a symbol of a humble servant, and then talked to them about his betrayal. He revealed that the traitor sat among them, the wine cup and bread had been served to his enemy, yet he explained, this was to fulfill Scripture. Even at this point, the disciples were arguing over who should be the greatest in the kingdom of God. (Verse 24). Jesus explained to them that these positions were preordained by his Father and the disciples were being called to serve one another. He wanted them to appreciate the fact that they had been invited and ordained to eat and drink at his table in his kingdom and would sit on the thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. Then the Lord said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon that your faith may not fail. And when you turn back, strengthen your brothers."

Peter was not aware of how weak he really was when push came to shove. He replied to the Lord that others may fail, but he would be there for him regardless of what happened. He would protect the Lord and keep him out of harm's way. He stated that he was ready to go to prison and even die for the Lord.

Jesus stated that before the rooster crowed that day, Peter would deny that he even knew Jesus three times.

The dark clouds of persecution have begun to rise here in America. Christians are being harassed and persecuted for their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. "One nation under God" is no longer respected and materialism and secularism has replaced it. There is a political correctness that has permeated our society and "evil" is called "good" and "good" is called "evil." The love for power and greed has caused people to be lovers of themselves and to replace God with the worship of the creation rather than the creator. They have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve created things rather than the Creator who is forever praised. See Romans 1:18-26. Because of this, God gave them over to sexual perversion and shameful lusts to receive in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. God gave them over to a depraved mind when they didn't think it was worthwhile to retain knowledge of God. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. The list goes on with being senseless, faithless, heartless, and ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.

John 3:19 says that this is the condemnation that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light neither do they come to the light lest their deeds should be revealed. But those who live by the truth come to the light so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

King David stated that he hid the word of God in his heart to keep him from sinning against God. Psalms 119:11

In the prayer that Jesus prayed prior to his crucifixion, he prayed for his disciples to remain strong and true to the teachings that he had entrusted them with. He also prayed for those who would receive the truth and believe on him through their words. His prayer stated that eternal life is given to those who believe and know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom God the Father sent to this world in order to redeem it. Jesus completed the work that he had been sent to do and he spoke about the ones that God had given to him. Those who obey God's commandments and love truth have an eternal home with Jesus. He prayed that his Father would protect believers by the power in his name so they may be one as he and his Father are one. Jesus said that while he was with them, he protected them and kept them safe by that name that his Father gave him. None other than Judas was lost. He desired to give believers the full measure of joy within them and he left them with the Word. He prayed that believers would be protected from the evil one and they would be sanctified by the truth which is the Word of God.

Ephesians 6:10 says to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the whole armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our

struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Wherefore 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, stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Satan has not changed his tactics since he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, a place of perfect peace, love, communion with God their Creator. Satan claimed the inheritance that God had given to the first children and the only hope that was left for them was the promise that Satan would be punished one day for his evil deeds and that mankind would be freed from the bondage that Satan had on them. God's mercy was extended and Jesus came to this earth to reverse the curse that Satan had on the world.

Satan has brought destruction, darkness, fear, violence, deceit and bondage to the earth, but God has come with light, truth, freedom, peace, and joy, love and kindness to deliver us from misery to all who accept him.

If you read the book of Job, you understand the depth of evil that Satan desires to infiltrate into the earth's atmosphere. He desired to strip Job of everything that he had and to leave him destitute and would have killed him if God would have allowed it. I love this book for it gives me insight into the depth of God's love for humanity versus the hate and destruction that Satan desires to pour onto this world. The character of God is plainly revealed in this book and we get a true picture of Satan and his schemes. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23.

Those who serve Satan and give their time, talent, and lives to serving him will reap a sorrowful harvest. Those who serve Jesus Christ and follow his commandments will reap rewards that are eternal and forever glorious. Everything we do for the cause of Christ will be rewarded on the day that Jesus returns for his bride. Our sorrows, heartaches, and pain will be done away with. The persecution that we suffer for spreading the gospel and bearing the wonderful name of Jesus will be rewarded by Jesus on that day. Don't be ashamed of him; don't bow to the pressure of the political arena to keep your faith quiet; proclaim the gospel to the lost that those who are in need of salvation will have a chance to be saved from eternal damnation.

Encourage one another and pray one for another that we will be strong and courageous, faithful until the return of Jesus Christ.