

Warrior #1
Where Are All the Warriors of God?
Luke 13:10-17
6/12/16

- We are embarking on a three week sermon series geared toward men, but it is for everyone as well. Next week is Father's Day and I encourage everyone to invite a father to come. It doesn't have to be your father, just any father. They will be celebrated and hear how God designed them to be warriors. The unfortunate thing is what the title today alludes to – where are all the warriors of God?
- You know, when I reflect on who I am, my personality and how I respond, I often act and respond with more masculine tendencies. I don't like to shop. I like action movies. I'm more task oriented than relationship oriented. During a confrontation, I believe it should be that you go to the person you have the conflict with directly, you has it out and then you move on. I don't think I've ever been described as catty.
 - o It really should come as no surprise. I have been outnumbered by men nearly all of my life. As most of you know, I have three brothers. I was always outnumbered growing up. I had to figure out a way to survive! We were much more likely to punch things out and get over it than to hold on to a grudge. I'm just glad that I was the oldest and the twins, who were the youngest, didn't get taller and stronger than me until I was in college!
 - o Now, for as much as I prayed and hoped for a little girl, alas – I have all sons. Outnumbered again! Destined to watch Kung Foo Panda, Transformers and sports. Round two!
 - o Even in my careers fields, I have been outnumbered. In college, I studied social work and criminal justice. My social work classes were mostly women. But, the criminal justice classes were filled with men, many of whom wanted to go into law enforcement and arrest some criminals.
 - o Even now, ministry is a male dominated field. When I first started in ministry, I used to say that going to pastors' meetings was like entering the "good old boys club." It was hard to break in at first. Many churches, even in the Church of God, are not open to women in ministry.
- And, during this sermon series, some might question, "What does she know about the male experience or about being a warrior? How can she speak into my life as a man?" Well, I can probably speak into a man's life about as well as male pastors for years and years have been speaking into the life of women.
 - o And, I will fully admit that I don't know what it is like to be a man. But, this I know – I know a good man. I know the characteristics of a godly man. And, I know the ultimate man, he is called the Son of Man, Jesus.

- And, I know this as well – the church is in desperate need of good men who are warriors of God.
- Warriors? Yes, warriors. God is a Warrior God who is calling men of God to be godly warriors.
 - Check out the first two sentences in Zephaniah 3:17 in the TNIV. It says. “The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.”
 - Now, let’s look at *Matthew 11:12 in the NLT which says “...the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it.”*
 - These are our theme verses for this series.
- Both of those passages depict a God who is a warrior who is advancing his kingdom forcefully while engaging with a violent enemy who is attacking. That’s a pretty strong picture, right? Unfortunately, it’s just a little bit too dangerous for most of today’s Christians.
 - They’d rather talk about: peace, love, forgiveness, mercy, gentleness. And, yes, God is also all of those things as well.
 - There is nothing wrong with these things, unless we omit the other. Just like there’s nothing wrong with apple pie unless that’s all you eat.
- See, I think there’s a tremendous deficiency of testosterone in the Body of Christ today so we’re going to insert some over the next three weeks. Now some people are a little uncomfortable with this kind of sermon series – talking about warriors and men and testosterone. Not me. I’ve been surrounded by it! And the fact is, we need more warriors, men of God and testosterone in our church today because we, both our church here and the church as whole have a serious problem.
 - The facts are that in an average church in an average town, men are outnumbered by women 2 to 1.
 - David Murrow, a researcher, stated, *“The target audience of almost everything in the church culture is geared toward a 50-55 year old woman.” Yikes!!*
 - Now, there’s nothing against women who are 50-55. I’m going to be there soon. But, the fact that the church is filled with more women than men and is basing its ministries largely on women is serious and is a problem that needs to be addressed.
- And, the first thing I think is why? Why are these the facts? Why aren’t men in the church as much as women? What has become the disconnect because it wasn’t always that way. For generations and generations it was men who took the lead to advance the kingdom of God and the church.
 - Something has changed. Maybe something in our message has changed as we have neglected the warrior God and advancing the kingdom of God by force against an enemy and instead we have preached a kumbaya gospel of love, peace and harmony until men can’t connect with it anymore.

- Kenny Luck said, *“In the mind of the average man, the church is where you go to learn how to be nice.”*
- Now, we should be teaching our boys to be nice and respectful and good. But, there’s a reason why a boy puts on a Spiderman or Batman or a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle costume – he wants to grow up to be good – and dangerous. Christian men want to be both good and dangerous and strong as well.
 - It’s in his DNA. It’s who God made him to be. I’ve started reading a book by James Dobson called *Bringing Up Boys*. I realized that I needed some help! I survived being the sister of all brothers, but I needed some more information about raising men of God.
 - Dr. Dobson talks about the real effects of testosterone on boys and how different boys are from girls. This difference is a God-given difference, not a socialization. You know, we live in a time where there is this idea that boys and girls are mostly similar and that we socialize them to be different. If we didn’t socialize them differently they would act very similarly.
 - Are you joking with me??? Where do these “experts” come up with this stuff? Do they even have children to observe the difference from an early age?
 - For example, Wil and I determined very early that we were not going to ever get our boys toy guns. Now, if others do, that’s them. Wil, being from Haiti, witnessed gun violence and we just want our boys to understand that guns are not toys and not something that they should be playing with. They are serious.
 - One day, about three weeks into Josiah starting kindergarten, I got yellow slip meaning that Josiah had been sent to the office. The offense – he ate his pizza slice until it kind of looked like a gun and then he started pretend shooting the other kids at his table and surrounding tables.
 - This is a kid who has never had a toy gun! Yet, he sure knew what to do.
- That’s how boys are! That’s how they were designed! Kenny Luck also wrote this, *“Every man is like a box of dynamite. It’s not a question of whether a guy has power or not; it’s a question of what kind of influence will he leave.”*
 - For our boys and men, it’s not a question of whether or not you are different from women – you are! You want to be dangerous and strong. You want to be a box of dynamite! You want to make a bang! The question is what kind of bang or influence are you going to make?
 - Jesus was the same. He was a man. He wanted to make a bang and his bang influenced the world forever.
- The problem, though is that we have re-framed Jesus in a way that doesn’t depict the full picture of who he is.

- Because Jesus is the guy who said, *“The kingdom of heaven advances forcefully.”* He is the guy called a *“WARRIOR GOD”* in the Old Testament.
 - He was a carpenter. He worked with his hands. He had a strong back, calloused hands and powerful biceps. He didn’t have power tools. He did all of his carpentry by hand.
 - Jesus is the guy who got ticked at the church leaders in His day who allowed money changers and merchants in the temple instead of keeping it sacred as a place of prayer and worship. So, he made a home-made whip, charged in turning over tables and running everyone out with his whip.
- But how have we framed Him? Let’s take a look of some pictures of Jesus that we googled. **(Pics of effeminate Jesus)**
- The church began to portray him as a girly man, for lack of a better description. We’ve made Jesus look weak! No man wants to be weak!
 - And, you probably noticed that Jesus is white with blue eyes! Right! When was the last time you saw a blonde, blue eyed person from the Middle East? Come on!
- Now I don’t doubt that Jesus is all the things these pics suggest – loving, kind, approachable, tender, etc... but ISN’T HE MORE?
- Christian author Philip Yancey wrote, *“How would telling people to be nice to one another get a man crucified? What government would execute Mister Rogers or Captain Kangaroo?”*
 - There must have been more to this man – much more that made him so dangerous, that made his kingdom of heaven advancing so forceful that violent people had to attack him and murder him. What Jesus did was the example of Matthew 11:12.
- So, this morning, we are going to look at if Jesus was Mother Teresa or William Wallace.
- I think we all know who Mother Teresa is, but just in case...Mother Teresa lived in poverty in India and reached out to those who were in dying and destitute. She cared for those that most people wouldn’t touch. She cared for the dying, for the outcasts, for the untouchables. She gave everything she had, living a very simple life and taking a vow of poverty so that everything that was ever given to her went to help others.
 - William Wallace is the hero of the movie Braveheart. That movie was based on the real William Wallace, a Scottish knight, who fought for Scotland’s independence against the English in the 1200s.
 - So, which one was more like Jesus?
- If one of the quotes we read earlier is true, then to most men, God is either distant or he is weak. He’s that meek and mild guy in all the Jesus pics. He’s like the world’s

nicest guy. Mister Rogers with a beard. And, to most men, they view the church as saying, "Be nice. Be swell. Be like Mother Teresa.

- Now, men, if I were to ask you to be like Jesus and you thought that meant to be meek, mild, passive and weak, would you choose Jesus?
 - I know my brothers wouldn't have chosen that. I know a 6 year old and 4 year old little boys who would say, "What?" They don't want to be weak.
 - Shoot, as a woman who has been surrounded by men, I wouldn't want that either. I'd much rather be told to be like William Wallace.
- So, the Question of the Day: ***"Is Jesus more like Mother Teresa or William Wallace?"*** What do you think?
- Here's what I think. I think we put Jesus into a box too many times. I think Jesus transcends any preconceived idea of him.
 - So, my answer: If you're a leper, outcast, diseased, the reject, you're in crisis, Jesus is like Mother Teresa. He gives of himself to reach out to those who are the most needy. He is compassionate, he is tender, he is embracing.
 - If you're like Pharisee, those religious leaders who were the crooked self-appointed right/wrong police, who thought they were better than other, then Jesus is more like William Wallace.
 - Jesus embodies both, depending on who he is dealing with.
- So, let's look this morning at Jesus the warrior and his warrior traits.
- If you ever watched the movie, Braveheart, there is a scene when William Wallace makes a freedom speech in front of a rag tag group of rebels who are clearly outnumbered by the British army. There is also a part of that scene when William Wallace starts to ride toward the British army and one of his trusted leaders says, "Where are you going?" Wallace says, "I'm going to pick a fight."
- Jesus came to earth and entered into humanity to pick a fight. He most definitely was going to pick a fight with Satan, sin and death. And, at times, he picked fights with others.
 - Jesus is much more likely to pick a fight with the Pharisee type. The Pharisees were religious bullies. Jesus had no problem picking a fight with a bully.
 - In Luke 13, Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath and the Pharisees get all bent out of shape. What does Jesus do? Does he place nice? NO, he picks a fight.
 - Let's read **Luke 13:10-17**.
- Then, on another occasion, when He heals and they get mad, He raises the bar and forgives sin. Talk about picking a FIGHT! This is why they wanted to kill him! He kept taking things too far and putting them to shame and calling them hypocrites!

- They didn't even want to accept him as a Rabbi or teacher or a healer and now Jesus is playing the God-card! Who does he think he is?
- He's the Warrior God. He is the Lord who is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.
 - Is the Lord a nice guy? Absolutely. But, remember what his purpose was that we talked about last week – to seek and save the lost. He will go to war to seek and save the lost. That means, he will go to war for his people.
 - Tremper Longman writes that *“Virtually every book of the Bible tell us about God's warring activity.”*
- When does God go to war? When his people need a warrior! God goes to war for his people.
 - I wonder if the Egyptians who kept Israel under bondage would call God nice? What did he bring upon them to free his people - Plagues, pestilence, death of firstborn.
 - Do you remember Samson? God gave him great strength to defend the Israelites against the Philistines. He killed a lion with bare hands and killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey.
 - Did you ever notice that the Bible in Judges 15:14 says all these things happened when *“the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily”* Think about it...He was doing these things under the Spirit of the WARRIOR God.
- Now I'm not suggesting that men become brooding bullies, nor that this is what Jesus was. It's quite the opposite God become warrior to defend his people from the bullies.
 - The Bible is clear that Jesus was a powerful man on this earth, and men who are like Him will be WARRIORS for their families and their God.
- As a warrior, Jesus also stands firm in his purpose. Jesus never shied away from His calling and purpose in spite of what his calling or purpose would bring. Let's take a look at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - Hired thugs come in the dead of night, under the cover of darkness which show that they are cowards. Why not in the day, in the middle of town? Because they were afraid of the people. They knew they weren't doing the right thing.
 - Let's see what Jesus does and says in John 18:4-8
- Look at the powerful heroic nature of Jesus' presence. Just his presence was strong enough to incite fear and respect in others.
 - These thugs came to arrest Jesus for the religious leaders. They are strong, bouncer-built kind of guys. Yet, they are so intimidated by Him that when He speaks they fall to the ground.

- But, what does Jesus do? He submits to them because his purpose was to seek and save the lost. To save the lost, to save us, he had to sacrifice himself. He stood firm in that purpose while enduring a brutal death, knowing that his death would turn into a resurrection that would bring true and complete salvation for his beloved people.
- Jesus was no pale faced girly man, speaking softly and avoiding confrontation, who eventually couldn't hide anymore and got himself killed.
- Jesus was, is, and always will be a WARRIOR. This is true when He was on this earth.
 - And when He returns, He'll be riding on a white horse, with a double-edged sword in His hand and a robe dipped in blood.
 - That sounds more like William Wallace than Mother Teresa. It surely doesn't sound weak to me.
- In fact, most people mistake His meekness for weakness. Jesus was meek, but he was never weak.
 - One of the most powerful statements about Jesus and those who follow Him is that they are meek. Jesus even said, "Blessed are the meek for they will..." do what? Inherit the earth! That's a pretty big reward and blessing!
- But to be meek IS NOT the same as being weak. Meekness (which is also humility) = "strength under control"
 - Now, I know men who like to display their strength by throwing temper tantrums or bullying their families. They use their size or their words or their putdowns or their temper to manipulate people into doing what they want. That is not strength. That's not even being a man. That is being a jerk. I call it like I see it.
 - It doesn't take strength to do those things it just take immaturity and insecurity.
- But the greatest strength is strength under control. It takes far greater strength to control your temper or to control your emotions or to control your mouth than it does to just let everything fly.
 - Jesus had the strength to come down off the cross at any moment. He could have snapped his finger and put to death everyone who hit him, who spit on him, who taunted him. But, that wouldn't have displayed his greatest strength.
 - His greatest strength was that he humbly endured the shame of all of that because of us. He was strong and controlled enough to stay on mission.
 - THAT'S WHAT A WARRIOR DOES!
- Jesus was strong enough to endure and submit for us because WARRIORS always come through. So then, just like Jesus endured the cross, we can endure trying situations, circumstances and problems.

- See, I'm convinced that God wants us to live by faith more than He wants us to be comfortable. So, from time to time, He allows some stuff to happen to build our faith. These things may be very scary and even seem dangerous. They certainly aren't fun to go through.
 - But in the end if we trust this WARRIOR God, He always comes through and he will lead us through.
- Over and over, we see this in the pages of Scripture as God come through for his people.
- The children of Israel are pinned against the Red Sea w/ no way out as Pharaoh's blood-thirsty men are barreling toward them, getting closer with every passing moment!
 - Then, GOD SHOWS UP! And, the sea parts!
 - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are about to burn up in a fiery furnace because they refused to bow to an idol of the king. The furnace is turned up to 7x hotter than usual. They are bound and thrown in.
 - Then, GOD SHOWS UP! They are in there walking around with a 4th guy – the pre-incarnate Jesus!!!
 - Against the killer giant Goliath, God sends a freckled-faced little shepherd boy with a slingshot. Everyone thinks the King is just desperately throwing in the towel.
 - THEN GOD SHOWS UP! The giant goes down with David's first stone!
 - A mob attacks Jesus, brutally beats Him, nails Him to the cross – he is murdered. The Hope of the World is dead and buried. Saturday comes in quiet and despair.
 - Then, Sunday comes and GOD SHOWS UP! The earth quakes, angels descend, the stone is rolled away and Jesus rises!
- See, I think God LOVES doing this kind of stuff. Why? Because God loves to come through.
- And, we all, but especially men, love these stories because deep in the heart of every man is a WARRIOR who wants to come through.
- Near the end of *Braveheart*, Robert the Bruce, argues with his father about turning his back and betraying William Wallace in battle. He says, "I will never be on the wrong side again!"
- Every man wants to boldly stand up on the right side and come through for what is right. There are many competing voices and many temptations that ask us to settle for less. Don't listen to them!! For the sake of your family, for the sake of the children watching you, for the sake of a community dying without salvation – listen to the warrior God, not to anything else.
 - Listen to the voice of a Warrior God who says, THERE IS A WARRIOR INSIDE OF YOU.

- I want to say to every man, “We need you!” We need you to be the warrior God has created you to be! We need you in our families. We need you in the church. We need you reaching our community.
 - I’m all for strong women in leadership, in ministry, and being able to do thing. But, we need our men! We need men who are warriors of God.

- You are intrinsically connected with the WARRIOR God, Jesus Christ. He created you to be a reflection of him as his warrior. Be the warrior God intended for you to be – one that picks fights with bullies, who goes to war for his people, especially his family, one who stands firm in his God-given purpose, who is meek, not weak and one who always comes through!
 - The warrior God makes you all these things. You don’t get these from your own strength or from money or from fame or from reputation or from any of your accomplishments. They come when the Spirit of a Warrior God comes upon you!

- While this sermon series is especially for men, this does not leave any of us out. This morning, maybe you are in need of a warrior in your life. You need someone to stand up for you. You need someone to come through for you. You don’t have to look any further - this WARRIOR God makes war for you.
 - He loves to come through for you. It might come at the last minute because that displays his power to a greater degree. He loves to go to battle for you against the bullies in your life whether they are people who are putting you down or the devil who is lying to you.

- Or maybe today, you need a God who can surround you with compassion and tenderness. Maybe today you need to feel his arms around you holding you. He can do that, too! Or, maybe you need a combination of both.
 - I’ve shared this story with others before. When I was living in Ohio, I was going through a time when I was really doubting myself and my call to ministry. I was struggling and my self-esteem was suffering because I was looking at the problems that didn’t seem to stop coming.
 - One evening, I was talking on the phone to a good Christian friend of mine who I had known since high school. I was just crying to him on the phone and he offered to pray with me. After the prayer, he immediately asked, “Ang, are you sitting on the couch in your living room?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “While I was praying, I saw an image of you, sitting on your couch and Jesus is right behind you with his arms around you, ready to hold you.”
 - “I’ve got to go!” I exclaimed. I hung up the phone and settled deep into the couch and into the strong arms of Jesus who held me as I cried. And, after I cried and was held for I don’t know how long, he gave me his peace and he spoke in my spirit, “I will fight for you.” Now, I didn’t see his arms, but I know they were there. I needed someone to hold me, one of the most

tender, intimate expressions of love for the heart of a woman and Jesus showed up.

- That's because He truly is EVERYTHING you need.
- *Psalm 62:11 – 12 says, “One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard; that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving.”*
 - So, is Jesus William Wallace or is He Mother Teresa?
 - He is both. He is STRONG and LOVING. He is whatever you need. And, men, he wants to transform you into both as well. May it be so.