

Warrior #3
You Are What You Believe
Judges 6 & 7
7/3/16

- A man appears before the pearly gates. “Have you ever done anything of particular merit?” St. Peter asks. “Well, I can think of one thing...” the man offers.
 - o “Once I came upon a gang of rough bikers who were threatening a young woman. The WARRIOR in me came out. I told them to leave her alone, but they wouldn’t listen.
 - o So I went to the largest and most heavily tattooed biker. I smacked him on the head, kicked his bike over, ripped out his nose ring and threw it on the ground, and told him, ‘Leave her alone now or you’ll answer to me.’”
 - o St. Peter was impressed. “When did this happen?” “A couple of minutes ago.”¹

- For several weeks, we’ve been talking about being a warrior of God – not a warrior that gets defeated like that, but a warrior that is victorious! This series has specifically been geared toward men and how families, churches and communities need men to be the warriors they were created to be.
 - o We talked the first week how we don’t often see Jesus as a warrior. Somehow it’s hard for us to connect with the “Warrior” designation of God.
 - o But the Bible doesn’t seem to have trouble with it.
 - Our theme verse, Zephaniah 3:17a says, *The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.*
 - Exodus 15:3 says *“The Lord is a Warrior; the Lord is his name.”*

- We’ve seen how it seems like this “militant version” of God unsettles us. It’s like we don’t want Him to be like this. We don’t want to be afraid of him.
 - o We read those verses in Scripture that talk about fearing the Lord and we have a problem with it. So, we have relegated Jesus to be passive, mild and only loving and forgiving. We forget that Jesus, is the same Lord of the Old Testament. He is to be feared, awed and respected because he is powerful, he is a warrior. He does war for his people and for his cause.
 - o Isaiah 42:13 says, *“The Lord will march out like a mighty man, like a Warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.”*
 - o And, Jeremiah 20:11 says, *“But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail.”*

- So, why is all of this so important? Why have we spent so much time talking about God as a warrior? Well, it’s because if we can believe that God is a warrior, then we

are more likely to believe that we are warriors. You will eventually become a product of what you believe.

- All great athletes, presidents, leaders and corporate CEOs arrived where they are because they believed they could before anyone else believed in them.
 - We can look at one of the current candidates for President of the United States. Donald Trump has no experience as president. He has held no political office that I know of. He has run companies and hosted a reality TV show. But, he sure believes in himself and has been able to convince millions of others to believe in him, too.
- If you are to become the person God has destined you to be, you must believe in yourself and see yourself through God eyes.
- Herb True once said, *“Many people succeed when others do not believe in them. But rarely does a person succeed when he does not believe in himself.”*
 - If you are to become the person God has destined you to be, you must believe that you are what God sees in you. Do you know how God sees you? God sees you as a champion. A mighty WARRIOR.
 - I’m convinced He believes in you more than you believe in yourself! So often God calls us to be or do something great and we say, *“Not me. I can’t. I’m not smart enough, educated enough, rich enough...I don’t have what it takes.”*
- That’s just how a guy named Gideon responded in Bible times. In Judges 6, the Midianites had invaded Israel and had ravaged the land to such an extent for seven years that everything was gone – animals, crops, everything. The people were starving and crying out to the Lord for help.
- So, the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon (now, if you will remember, we have learned that the angel of the Lord is different than an angel of the Lord. The angel of the Lord was reference to the pre-incarnate Jesus). So, Jesus found Gideon hiding out from the Midianites with some grain he had managed to hide as well.
 - Check out what Jesus says to him in verse 12, *“Mighty hero (another version says mighty warrior), the Lord is with you!”*
 - The Lord went on to tell him of the awesome plan He had for Gideon. Check out this plan in verse 14...
 - But, Gideon’s response sounds like some of you are thinking right now as we talk about being a warrior. Here is what Gideon said, in verse 15...
- There was a big difference in the way Gideon saw himself as the least and the way God saw him (the WARRIOR, a might hero).
- Gideon felt weak – God saw him as strong. Gideon felt unqualified – God saw him as perfect for the job. Gideon felt insecure – God saw him with boldness to lead His people into battle and win the victory!

- And, with some prompting and encouragement from a powerful God, that's just what Gideon did!
- In the same way, God sees you as a WARRIOR! He sees you as a man or woman of great faith and who can do great things for the kingdom of God. You can go over and over all of the reasons that disqualify you as a warrior, but God says, "I'm with you and when I'm with you, you are a warrior!" And, who are you to refute what God sees in you – he created you!
 - I have a brother who I know that I know felt a call to ministry. He told us that he felt that call when he was younger. But, he never thought he could do it. He wasn't smart enough, he didn't do well enough in school, he didn't know enough Bible, he wasn't like Dad, he couldn't speak in front of people like that. So, he never followed God's call for his life.
 - And, I believe to the depth of my being that because he put himself down and doubted his ability to fulfill the call that God placed on him, he has not experienced the fullness of joy that God had for him if he would have accepted God's call to ministry and to the greatness that God had for him.
- That's not to say that you have to be in ministry in order to follow God's calling of greatness. It means that whatever God's calling is for you, that you follow it. God's calling for his people is always to be warriors for his kingdom and to do great things to advance the kingdom of God.
 - But for us to achieve greatness and the fullness of life and joy that Jesus wants us to experience, we must see ourselves in the same light that he sees us through.
 - W.W. Ziege said, "Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; Nothing can help the man with the wrong attitude."²
 - What kind of attitude do you have? How do you see yourself? More importantly, how do you see God? Do you believe that he is really able to do anything, even the impossible?
- If you desire to be a warrior of God and to see yourself as the warrior God sees in you, then you have to start seeing yourself do the things that warriors of God do. In your outline, I refer to it as doing warrior stuff.
- The first thing that warriors do is that Warriors of God overcome. See yourself as an overcomer!
 - 1 John 4:4 tells us this, "*But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*"
- It's a fact; we're going to encounter some evil in this world. We need to face it with confidence and boldness. Now, we would like to face it with the confidence and

boldness of the guy in this story I shared at the beginning. Although I'm not ruling out that kind of fight, usually it's a spiritual WAR you're in.

- Unfortunately, I think most people, even Christians, believe it is more realistic to win a fight against flesh and blood than to win a spiritual fight. We talked a couple of weeks ago about how men dream of being able to rush in and protect their family from a physical danger, but that kind of fight is probably not going to happen. Spiritual battles, though, are a guarantee.
 - But, I think that when I talk about spiritual war or a spiritual fight, that most people kind of check out. They think it is easier to fight physically than spiritually. They think a spiritual fight is not really real or they are confused as to what that it.
 - Spiritual warfare is anything that pulls you or anyone away from God and the truth of God. It is when the forces of Satan are working to keep you from living in the fullness of life that Jesus offers. Maybe you don't like to think about Satan. Maybe you don't like to think of a spiritual realm. But, our enemy Satan, and the spiritual realm is as real as the hard wooden pew you are sitting on and feeling on your backside right now.
- Yet, it is not something you need to fear, warrior of God! You have been empowered to overcome spiritual forces and to win any spiritual battle. Yes, Satan and his demons are much bigger and stronger than you. You can never win the battle on your own. But, you have the Holy Spirit of Almighty God living in you and that gives you every advantage because when the Holy Spirit of God living in you rises up against the enemy, Satan has to flee!!
- Ps 46:1 says, *"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in time of trouble."*
 - He's always ready to help not because he's around in the neighborhood. He's ready because He's living inside of you that's what 1 John 4:4 that we just read says. The Holy Spirit is living inside of you, warrior!
 - You can't get much more "ready" than that.
- That's why God sees you as anything but ordinary. You're a WARRIOR in the likeness of your Father. There are seeds of greatness within you because God planted them there. When you allow yourself to dream and think of possibilities, potential, ideas, dreams of doing great things for God, who do you think planted those there?
- This past Wednesday, in a deacon meeting, we were discussing the book we are reading together, Simple Church. It talked about how the church is the offensive force. Satan is always on defense. The question is how much of a difference are we going to make? How much of a dent are we going on make in the gates of hell?
 - I said, "I want to blow up one of the walls of those gates!" Do you think that is my idea? Do you think in my human nature that is my desire 'cause I'm

- super brave and strong? No way! That was planted in me by the Holy Spirit who lives in me as I have prayed to have his mind and his vision.
- You have those same desires. Maybe you have pushed them down and replaced them with thoughts of how comfort is better and not getting yourself ruffled is easier. That is not of God! God is ready to start seeing some fruit from His seeds that he has planted in you.
- The Bible says that *“God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.”* Notice it is in the past tense. God has blessed us. God has already done it. He’s deposited everything in you that you need to be victorious. You’re avoiding carrying out the dreams of spiritual greatness that God has planted in you because you don’t think you can do it. But, God has already done it! Victory is yours!
 - God believes & says great things about you. And, he has already done it!
 - 20 years before Abraham had the 1st child, God said, *“I have made you the father of many nations.”* *“Have made...”* – past tense – already done. God counted it as already done!
 - Similarly, God says great things about you. In Romans 8:37, God says, *“We are more than conquerors.”* It doesn’t say, *“We will be, could be, might be, someday gonna’ be...”* – **WE ARE!!!**
 - You need to realize that right now, before you move out of that wooden pew this morning YOU ARE MORE THAN A CONQUEROR! You’re sitting next to someone who is *“more than a conqueror.* Turn to your neighbor and say, *“It’s a privilege to be sitting by someone like you!”*
 - How can this be so? BECAUSE, going back to 1 John 4:4... *the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*
 - Yet, you can’t be a *“more than a conqueror”* without conquering something. You can’t sit on the sidelines. In order to be the overcomer that God intended for you to be and to realize the overcoming dreams that God gave you, you’ve got to get in the battle, not ignore it.
 - You can’t conquer something while running from it. WARRIORS don’t run from the enemy. WARRIORS run to the enemy. Warriors storm the gates of hell and blow up some walls!
 - Gideon was hiding and God said, *“Get busy conquering!!!”* He’s saying the same to us. We have hidden for too long in our homes and in our churches. We have to get busy conquering!
 - Next, warriors overcome because God’s warriors have delegated power.
 - Mark 11:23 (NIV) says, *“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.*

- When I was kid and first heard that verse, I went outside and went up to the biggest hill and told it to move. It didn't do anything. I was very disappointed.
- Now, I realize that this verse is not so literal. It is talking about mountainous situations in your life. There are people in this room who are facing big circumstances and situations that you don't know what to do with. Some are even frightening. This verse says that because of your covenant with God, there is no mountain in your life that God cannot move.
 - Your situation might scare you and worry you, but your situation DOES NOT scare God. *He is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.*
 - God has handled much more difficult situations than what you are facing today.
- Let's look at what God did through Gideon. After calling Gideon to rise up and overcome and Gideon finally followed God's directions, God led him to put together an army of Israelites. This army was going to defeat the Midianites. But, let's look what God did in **Judges 7:2-8**.
 - And, do you know the rest of the story? Those 300 men went up against the Midianite army that numbered so many they looked like grains of sand on a seashore – too many to count! They lighted torches, they shouted, they blew horns and broke clay pots and the Midianites got so scared and confused that they fought each other! The Israelites didn't even have to fight!
- Listen, your problem is not the first one a child of God has faced. If he can bring about a victory for Gideon, he can fight for you!
 - When God said that your faith could move mountains, He wasn't talking about some "pie-in-the-sky" idea. He was talking about the mountain *you're facing RIGHT NOW!*
 - The mountain *you're facing every time you wake up* in the morning. The mountain *you see each day at work*. The mountain *you see every time you look in the checkbook*. The mountain *you see every time you visit the doctor*. The mountain *you see each time you're alone with your spouse*. The mountain *you see each time you face temptation*.
 - If you're tired of looking at that mountain, I believe that today IS YOUR DAY! Stop *hiding* from that mountain, *running* from that mountain, *bowing* to that mountain, *crying* about that mountain, *talking* about that mountain...SPEAK TO THAT MOUNTAIN!!! Tell it to move and fall into sea!!!!
 - You are a WARRIOR! You are equipped with Power from God most High. You can overcome that mountain because you have delegated power directly from heaven itself.
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- Next, Warriors are Set Free. This means that warriors are free from sin. Now, I think a statement like that loses people. You never think you are going to be free from sin. But, before I lose you, keep listening. As a warrior of God, you may never be perfect, but you can experience freedom as you overcome by the power delegated to you by God. Let's see how.
- There are more people living in bondage to physical addictions than ever before. Addiction is the last stage of a horrible cycle that Satan uses to destroy God's children.
 - o James 1:14-15 NIV says that *Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.* ¹⁵ *These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.*
 - o So then, James lays out a **Sin/Bondage Process**
 - Step #1 – Temptation comes.
 - Step #2 – We are enticed by the temptation.
 - Step #3 – Sin is birthed in our lives.
 - Step #4 – Sin grows to addiction = death.
 - o God has power over all forms of addiction. And, has the power to set us free.
- Today I want to talk about a particular addiction that is often dodged in church circles. Since we have been focusing on men through this series, this addiction, this sin, is one that men are particularly vulnerable to. In fact, it is every man's battle.
 - o It is the sin of the lust of the eyes. It is the sin of pornography.
- There is a growing addiction to pornography in this country that is terrifying.
 - o According to a past *U.S. News and World Report*, the porn industry grosses more than the gambling industry, more than Hollywood's box office receipts, more than Rock & Country Music combined, more than the NFL, NBA, MLB gross combined.³ (ABC News)
 - o And, guess who is the world's leading producer of porn – the U.S. with 150 new hardcore movies per week. Each year, Americans spend over \$150 million on adult movies. Playboy's website averages 5 million hits per day.
 - o Telephone Sex – each night between 9 p.m. – 1 a.m. ¼ million Americans dial a number for phone sex.
 - o There are now more outlets for hardcore porn in the US than McDonald's.
- Here's the most frightening stuff: 90% of kids 8-16 have seen porn. Pornographers are now targeting children and Christians. There were some former porn sites with the domains: kids4christ.com, pray.com and adultbiblestudy.com, until some warriors put up a fight and threw a fit about this!
 - o But, the fact is, if you don't have a computer screening program downloaded in your home computer, if a child uses a search engine and

uses words like: Barbie, Disney, Nintendo, Toys, Games...they will likely be directed to a list of sites and some of them will be porn sites.

- We are being attacked at every angle.
 - o And, hear me well - PORNOGRAPHY IS IN THE CHURCH! Nationally – 1 of 2 male churchgoers views Internet porn.⁴

- Men of God, if you are in that statistic, know this – there is no judgement from me. We all have our battles. I have said many times that my signature sin, my sin battles might be different from yours, but they are sinful nonetheless. You are not alone. But, also know this - you can be free.
 - o Let me first offer you an earthly solution: www.xxxchurch.com. This is a Christian website that helps men with porn addiction. It provides accountability, information, small groups and other resources needed to gain freedom.
 - o No one wants to be exposed. But, here's the thing – freedom can only be lived out in the light. Freedom is not hidden. Everybody needs accountability. This is one way to get accountability from other men who know the depth of this battle for men.
 - o God's Word tells us "Let there no be a hint of sexual perversion among you." GIVE IT NO ROOM IN YOUR LIFE! Men of God, you will never be the warrior of God that you were uniquely and specifically designed to be if you are filling your mind and thoughts with lust and pornography. I don't care that our society says it's no big deal – lies! I don't care that even some marriage counselors say a little bit will spice up your marriage life – lies! People say it is harmless – lies!
 - o Men, you were designed to be visual beings and so this is truly every man's battle. Warriors, you've got to fight this battle of the mind in order to be able to fight any other spiritual battle for yourself, your family or your community.

- And, the best solution, the eternal solution to this battle of every man is to fill your mind with something else. This is what Jesus said in **John 8:32, 34-36**

- What sets you free? Knowing the truth! The truth, the absolute truth can only be found in and only in God's Word. Nothing will set you free like getting the Word of God in your life.
 - o I'm talking about hearing it, receiving it, accepting it, walking in it, standing on it, battling Satan with it, living it! The TRUTH will set you free.
 - o The Word of God is "active" & "alive." It is not some collection of dead old stories. It is not some boring old book with dead words on a page. If you let it come to life in you – you won't stay the same! God's Word will awaken your inner WARRIOR! You will be set FREE!
 - o Freedom is found in knowing, loving and living God's Word.

- And, you might be thinking, “Well, I come to church and listen to you and I try to live a good life. Isn’t that enough?”
 - ABSOLUTELY NOT! You gotta’ live it. You gotta’ fall in love with His Word. You gotta’ let it change you!
 - Will Rogers once said, “Even if you are on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”
 - You’re here. You’re on the right track – good. But, Satan can still run you over if you just sit there rather than live the Word. Now it’s time to get moving!!! You must develop a passion for the Word of God. Read it, walk in it until it changes you.

- Can I tell you why half of all Christian men view porn? Why half of all Christian marriages end in divorce? Why many Christians’ ethics mirror the ethics of non-Christians?
 - It’s because of what Hosea 4:6 says, *my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge*. We simply don’t have the knowledge of the Word in us.
 - You are a WARRIOR not because of the size of your biceps or bank account or truck. You are empowered to be a WARRIOR by the awesome Word of God! Today’s Christians are ignorant of the TRUTH that sets men free.

- The truth is that God sees you as a warrior. He has given you the truth to refute the lies of Satan and to set you free. He has given you the authority and power so that you can overcome! You can walk in the swagger, in the confidence of a warrior who is not puffed up with himself, but who is plugged into the Power Source!
 - You have to believe it so that you can be it! Otherwise, you are settling for much, much less. I want to conclude with one last story this morning.

- Years ago, before transatlantic flight was common, a man wanted to travel to the US from Europe. The man worked hard, saved every extra penny he could, and finally had just enough money to purchase a ticket aboard a cruise ship. The trip at that time required about 2-3 weeks to cross the ocean. He went out and bought a suitcase and filled it full of cheese and crackers. That’s all he could afford.
 - Once on board, all the other passengers went to the large, ornate dining room to eat their gourmet meals. Meanwhile, the poor man would go over in the corner and eat his cheese crackers. This went on day after day. He could smell the delicious food being served in the dining room. He heard the other passengers speak of it in glowing terms as they rubbed their bellies and complained about how full they were, and how they would have to go on a diet after this trip.
 - The poor traveler wanted to join the other guests in the dining room, but he had no extra money. Sometimes he’d awake at night and dream of the sumptuous meals the other guests described.

- Toward the end of the trip, another man came up to him and said, “Sir, I can’t help but notice that you’re always over there eating those cheese and crackers at mealtimes. Why don’t you come into the banquet hall and eat with us?”
 - The traveler’s face flushed with embarrassment. “Well, to tell you the truth, I had only enough money to buy the ticket. I don’t have any extra money to purchase fancy meals.”
 - The other passenger raised his eyebrows in surprise. He shook his head and said, “Sir, don’t you realize the meals are included in the price of the ticket? Your meals have already been paid for!”
- How many in this room are just like that weary traveler? You are settling for less because you don’t realize that God has already paid the price for your abundance. He has already fought for you so that you can be a warrior for him!
- Friend, it’s time for you to stop eating cheese crackers and pull up to the Master’s Table & Feast!!! It is time to stop cowering when you could be conquering! It is time to stop bowing to sin when you could be free!
 - Don’t worry about the price – it’s already been paid for! Don’t worry about what God might ask you to do – he’s already given you the power to do anything! Don’t cling to your old way, your comfortable way – you’ll miss out on the very best way, God’s way.
 - Warriors of God – rise up! Rise up knowing that you are God’s Warriors to be used by him to overcome the sin in your own life and to overcome the forces of evil. Rise up and blow up some walls of hell by the power and strength of God himself living inside of you. Can you see it? Do you believe it? Then, live it!

¹ Source: forwarded email

² Ibid., p. 61.

³ ABC News, 2003.

⁴ WorldNetDaily Wistleblower magazine, 2003.