

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

**"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand
against the schemes of the devil.**

**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."**

Ephesians 6: 10-12

Your perspective of the things that go on in our country, especially of the things that have been going on for the past three or four months, kind of depends on which news channel you watch or which newspaper you read. Turn to one channel for your news, and you will hear one perspective of what is wrong with our nation. But switch to a different news station, and you will hear a whole different opinion of what is wrong. You get what I'm saying, right?

But one thing no news station or newspaper seems to be saying is that what is truly at the core of our problems as a nation, and even as the human race, is that there is an INVISIBLE war going on. And I'm not talking about the war against the microscopic virus. Even that virus is not invisible if you have a powerful enough microscope. But there is no microscope powerful enough to see the true Enemy who is at work in our nation and our world. That Enemy, of course, is Satan.

According to the media, and even most politicians, the enemy is the "other side." Some say the enemy is the police. Some say the enemy is the quest for liberalism in our nation. Others would say the enemy is conservatism, or the extreme right or extreme left. I am not a historian nor a sociologist, but it strikes me that our nation has never been divided to the degree that it is today. Even during the Civil War, there tended to be geographical boundaries. That's not the case today. In fact, the line that marks different perspectives today often runs right down the middle of a single household.

If you are a follower of Jesus, please don't be fooled by the real Enemy. Satan is having a field day with all of the division that is going on. Either he started it and the sinful nature is fueling it, or the sinful nature started it and Satan is fueling it. Either way, gasoline is being thrown onto the fire instead of water.

The water that is needed is Jesus. If you are reading this little devotional, it is likely that you love Jesus and know that He loves you. But so many people in our nation do not know this. Whether they are "on the right" or "on the left," whether they are pro-capitalism or pro-socialism, we have a common Enemy. Satan doesn't care which side we choose, as long as we keep disagreeing and hating one another.

Christians are aware of an entirely different battle that is going on. And we know this, not because of the news channel we watch, but by the Bible that we read. In the reading above, we are told to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might ... to put on the whole armor of God." This is referring to spiritual armor, of course. The battle is a spiritual one. We know that Jesus has won the war by His death and resurrection, but the Enemy continues to fight. Don't let him bring you into the wrong fight.

We have the Armor of God. You can read about it in Ephesians 6:10-20. We have ONE offensive weapon in our arsenal. That weapon is the Word of God. It is the only weapon that can oppose the efforts of Satan. God's Word is the truth, even though many do not acknowledge it as such. But if you remain in the Word of God, you will not be deceived by falsehood. And you will continue to cling to the message of the Gospel – the forgiveness of your sins.

It's not people against people. It's not even us against Satan. Jesus already defeated him. It's the truth against falsehood. Don't be deceived. In John's second Epistle, he writes: "Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what you have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching of Christ, has both the Father and the Son."

God's peace!
Pastor Jim