

Sermon Notes 'Playground or Battleground?'

Sometimes the underlying message of advertising is that we are entitled and should expect to enjoy and pursue the pleasures and comforts of life as if this were one great playground experience. However, the Bible teaches us that there are hidden and unseen forces at work to dismantle and destroy the beauty of God's world. Jesus knew this reality and constantly contended for the advance of God's Kingdom over the kingdom of darkness. He called those who would follow him to also take their place in contending and to recognise that the landscape in which we live here and now is one of a battleground. The playground is yet to come.

The assault of the enemy comes from 3 sources: the World, the Flesh and the Devil. What do you think is meant by:

- The World ((1 John 2:15)?
- The Flesh (Galatians 5:16-21)?
- The Devil (1 Peter 5:8 – Satan, the accuser)?

Read Ephesians 6:10-20 where Paul suggests 3 strategies to help us overcome the assault of the enemy in the battleground.

1. Be strong in the Lord (v10).
 - What does that mean and how can we do this? (Zech 4:6, 1 John 4:4, Phil4:13)
2. Put on the Full armour of God (v11, v13).
 - What do you think it means to; 'take your stand v11', 'to stand your ground'v13, 'to stand firm'v14. Jude talks about 'contending for the faith' (Jude v3). What does that mean in practical terms for you?
 - Talk through the parts of the armour and discuss how each one does its job.
3. Pray in the Spirit on all occasions (v18- 20).
 - Recall together what you know of Jesus's own practice of prayer.
 - What were the conditions like for Paul in which he was praying?
 - What does he pray for? Does that surprise you?

Pray for one another to recognise the context into which God has called us so that we may be dressed and equipped for the battleground not the playground.

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