

UHPC WORSHIP—MARCH 10, 2019

SERMON TOPIC: “THE BATTLE FOR SALVATION”

I believe it is Joyce Meyers who wrote a book about the “Battle For The Mind.” It is true and Jesus experienced it. Therefore, it is true for His followers too. Paul talks about it in Ephesians 6 saying that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Therefore, we are to put on the whole armor of God and stand firm against the wiles of the devil.

There is a war going on. It is a battle to capture, to control, and to keep the human, mind, spirit, and soul separated from our Creator, from His love, His peace, His security, His provision, all His goodness and His joy. It may be called a HOLY WAR! It is a DIVINE STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL, a struggle to free the human mind and senses and to make them subject to the will of Jehovah the Creator of the universe and everything in it. From the time humanity made the wrong choice and plunged the world into sin, it became God’s plan and intention to redeem us and to bring us back in right standing to Himself, to make us His children, and to be our ABBA/FATHER as it should be from the beginning. We are to become sons and daughters of God –no longer aliens, enemies of the Cross, and separated from God. BUT THIS WOULD NOT BE AN EASY TASK. We would need a perfect Deliverer, Redeemer, and Savior who was fully human and fully God to willingly offer Himself a perfect sacrifice and shed His unblemished blood as atonement for our sins.

Sin had the world in darkness and a shroud was over people’s minds. We had ears but could not hear and eyes to see but could not see from a spiritual perspective. We had brain and mind but could not understand spiritual things. THE LORD- JEHOVAH GOD IN HIS STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS DECIDED TO OFFER UP HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON TO FIGHT A DIVINE BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL AND TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION, TO REDEEM US AND TO PURCHASE OUR SALVATION. As deliverance from oppression in Egypt was necessary, so it became necessary for humanity as a whole to be delivered from sin and darkness and be saved, redeemed, and restored to life abundant and life eternal.

Beginning with the text from Deuteronomy 26, we heard how the Spirit of God strictly reminded the Israelites to remember their DIVINE DELIVERANCE from Egypt and their miraculous inheritance of the Land of Promise. The Spirit and the Word urged them to remember and to show gratitude by taking the first fruits of their produce to the Temple in a basket (respectfully prepared) and put it in the hand of the Levite or priest. They were to recount their history of God's divine deliverance and in gratitude they should tithe their first fruits to the servants of God for the work of the Kingdom of God.

Last Sunday we were reminded of the Transfiguration or the metamorphosis of Christ Jesus on the Mountain in the presence of Peter, James, and John. This was a deeper and more profound form of Christ's preparation to accomplish the SALVATION ASSIGNMENT at Jerusalem. THE BATTLE WOULD BE SEVERE AND STRONG AND HIS ANOINTING NEEDED TO BE ALSO POWERFUL AND SECURE. Today we find ourselves at another place of struggle for Jesus in His preparation to face the ultimate trial that would win the ultimate prize for us as human-beings. On this occasion, Jesus was not on the mountain peak, but he was led into the desert to be tempted of the devil. In Luke 4, we hear how Satan tempted Him with the three "IF's:"—IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD (3X). After forty days and forty nights of fasting, the Scripture tells us that Jesus was hungry and weak. That was when Satan decided to test His divinity and power to do miracles, signs, and wonders, and in the possession of worldly wealth and glory.

He wanted Jesus to cheapen his deity by submitting to the desires of the flesh. ***The divine battle for the mind to yield to the desires of the flesh and the senses was on.*** Isn't this where Satan fights the believer the most—our appetites, our natural senses, and worldly wealth and power?—Satan taunted Jesus in His mind saying: --"IF You are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." Certainly, the One who used five loaves and two fish to feed five thousand surely could make bread out of stones. Yet here and now His purpose had shifted to a greater calling. Things were about to get much more intense. He Himself would become our Living Bread—the Bread of Heaven. So, Jesus spoke the word from Deuteronomy 8: ***"Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."*** Then the devil took him up (in the spirit) to a high mountain and showed Him all the worldly wealth and glories of the world. ***Again the devil said: "IF"... you are the Son of God I will give you all these if you***

will bow down and worship me.” Again, Jesus hit him with the Scripture that says: “You shall worship the LORD your God and Him only you shall serve.” But the devil wasn’t done. So, he took Jesus (in the Spirit) to the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem and now he/Satan would quote Scripture to Jesus saying: Cast yourself down from here. ... Didn’t Psalm 91 say that the Father will give angels charge over you... they will bear you up in their hands lest you dash your foot against a stone? AGAIN, Jesus refused to listen to Satan’s taunts and temptations and said to him: “You shall not tempt the LORD your God...” Only then did the devil depart. Yet we are told, he left only for a while.

Remember Adam and Eve? It was their appetite, and their senses that got them into trouble in the first place and plunged humanity into darkness of sin and transgressions.

WHAT DOES THIS EXAMPLE AND EXPERIENCE OF JESUS TELL US? -- It tells us that in this world and in this life believers can expect to be tempted and tested in order to prevent us from finding and keeping our Salvation and fulfilling our divine calling and purpose. --It tells us that we must be fully armed with the Word of God in our heart and on our lips to fortify ourselves against the tricks of the adversary. Some of us may know this hymn which tells us: *“Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin. Each victory will help you some other to win. Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue... Look ever to Jesus, He will carry you through. Ask the Savior to help you, comfort, strengthen, and keep you. He is willing to aid you. He will carry you through.”*

Paul reminds us in Romans 10: 8-13, how simple and yet how powerful it is to have Salvation. It makes all the difference in any human life if we stick to it by faith and follow Jesus forever. All it takes is to believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Messiah, Savior, and Lord. Confess with our mouth what we believe in our heart, and we shall be saved. Being saved, we are instructed to publicly act on our faith by visibly demonstrating what we say and believe in our hearts and confess with our mouth in water baptism. In this the Bible tells us that symbolically we bury our sins with Christ, and we are raised to new and resurrected life in Him. Then we are to continue to study Him, learn of Him and be taught and to be teachers as life-long disciples under life-long discipleship and service. We are commanded to build up the Kingdom of God and to invite others

to Christ that as many as possible will enter into the Kingdom of God and have eternal life. Let me ask: "If Salvation were not vital and critical for every human being to have, why would the Father go to the extreme to sacrifice His only Beloved and only Begotten Son to die a horrible death to redeem us from sin, to prevent us from eternal separation from our Creator and damnation into hell?"

OUR SALVATION WAS BLOOD BOUGHT AND WRESTLED FROM THE DEVIL BY CHRIST JESUS OUR SACRIFICIAL LAMB OF GOD WHO CAME TO TAKE AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD. While Salvation is full and free, there is a journey from Egypt to the Promised Land that requires a new walk, a new talk, a new character, a new strength, a divine calling and purpose, that Satan will try to cut off. Jesus has shown us how to resist him and how to persist until he backs off. Certainly, none of us can do all that Jesus has done, but we have His example and His help. He has promised not to leave us alone. He said He would give us an Advocate in the Holy Spirit. He promised that He would intercede for His disciple and that the Holy Spirit would pray for us when we do not know how or what to pray. However, we must know our rights and exercise the promises in the Word that God has given to us. This will take some commitment and discipline.

SO, I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR US: -- DO YOU WANT TO WIN IN THIS FIGHT FOR YOUR SALVATION... OR DO YOU WANT TO LAY DOWN AND GIVE UP TO THE DEVIL what Jesus died for you to have? --DO WE WANT TO BE DEFEATED OR DO WE WANT TO BE VICTORIOUS? WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, THERE IS A BATTLE GOING ON. BUT IF WE ARE IN CHRIST JESUS, VICTORY IS ALREADY OURS AS WE REMAIN FAITHFUL AND FEED ON HIM AND ON HIS WORD DAILY, PRAY DAILY AND OFTEN. --DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE SALVATION? -- CAN YOU FEEL IT IN YOUR SOUL? --HOW SHALL WE KEEP IT? HOW SHALL WE PROTECT IT? HOW SHALL WE ENJOY IT? -- BELIEVE IN OUR HEART, CONFESS HIM WITH OUR MOUTH, REPENT OF OUR SINS AND ASK PARDON AND MERCY, BAPTIZE, FOLLOW, LEARN, SERVE...REJOICE... AND GROW IN THE NEW LIFE AS A NEW CREATION IN AND THROUGH CHRIST JESUS. IN THE END YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID. WHY? -- Because abundant and eternal shall be ours. Victory is ours through the victory in Christ Jesus. One Hymn-writer says it this way: "The strife is o'er, the battle is done. The victory of life is won. The song of triumph has begun ..." This victory is global. It is universal because the battle was a cosmic one. This victory is life-changing. The battle for our Salvation has been wrestled from Satan and now it

belongs to “whosoever will.” WE ARE ON THE WINNING SIDE THROUGH OUR FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS OUR RISEN SAVIOR. AMEN.

DECLARATION—GIVE PRAISE AND THANKS!

PRAYER

Rev. Brenda R. Berry/ Pastor U.H.P.C.