

TAKEN BY STORM

VOLUME THREE

*Fighting the Good
Fight of Faith*

RANDALL J. BREWER

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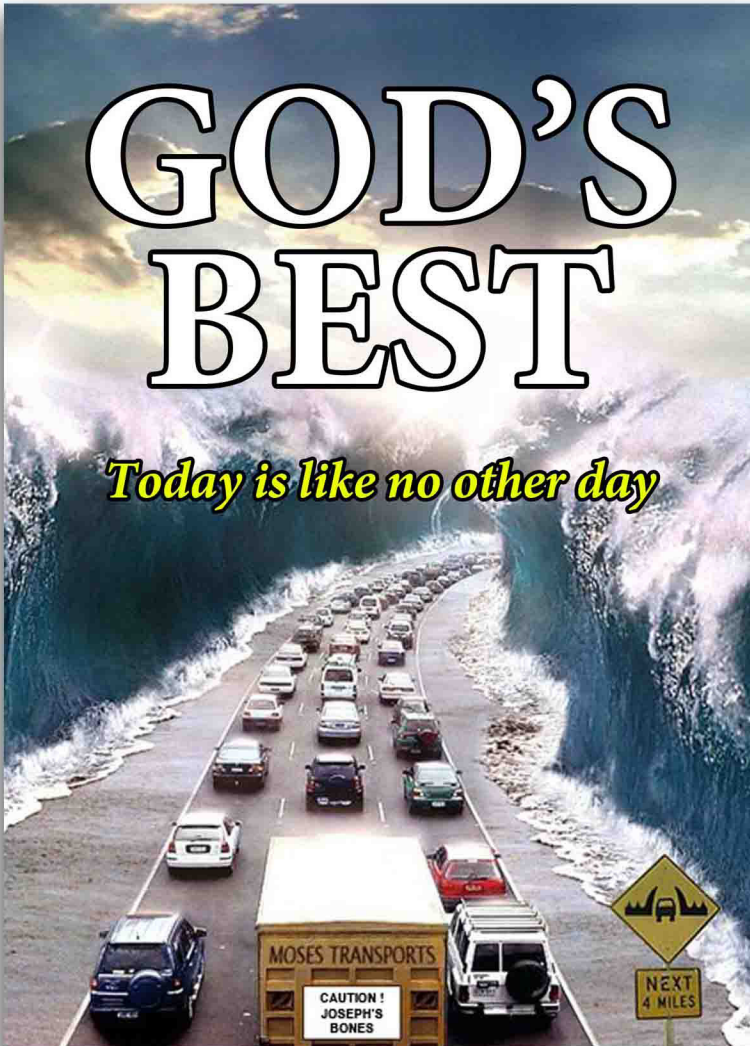
This book and the complete
series of *Taken By Storm* is
dedicated to my publisher,
Paul Baker, a friend who
sticks closer than a brother.

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GOD'S BEST

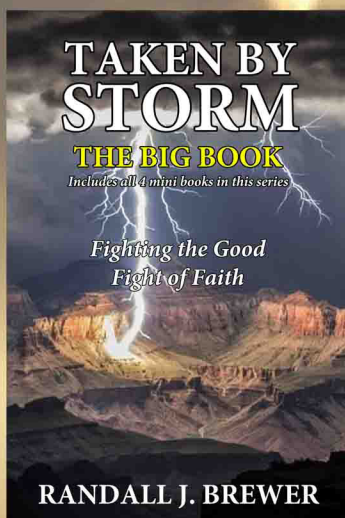
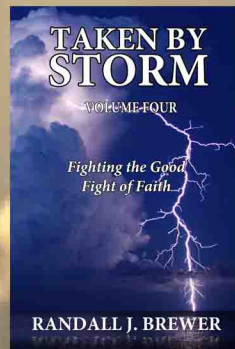
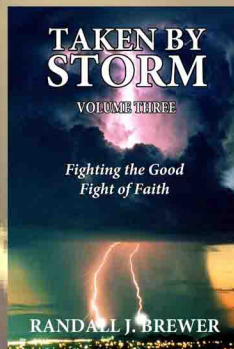
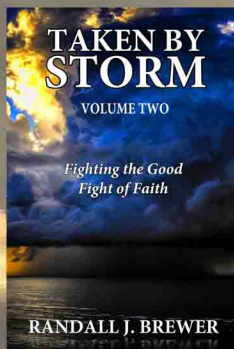
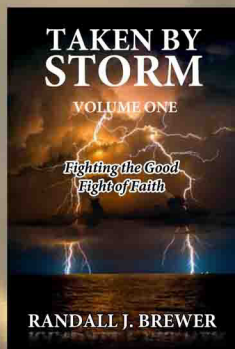
Today is like no other day



RANDALL J. BREWER

TAKEN BY STORM

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Author's BioBack Cover

The background of the entire image is a dramatic landscape. The top half shows a dark, stormy sky with heavy, dark clouds. A bright, horizontal band of light, possibly a rainbow or a break in the clouds, stretches across the middle of the sky. Below the sky is a golden, hilly landscape, likely a field or a valley, with a fence line visible in the foreground. The overall mood is dramatic and powerful.

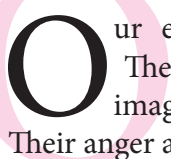
THE **KINGDOM** OF GOD

**suffers violence,
and the violent
take it by storm.**

Matthew 11:12

THE TAKEN BY STORM SERIES

CALLING ALL TO ACTIVE DUTY

ur enemies, Satan and his demons, are violent creatures. They hate God and all creation, including those made in the image of God, because like God... we too are on every continent. Their anger and hatred cannot be measured.

It's hard for us to wrap our head around the concept that such creatures could exist. Their anger runs deep. They lost the war in heaven against God and His angels, and were exiled to the third planet from the Sun to eventually fall under the control of the ruling creature, man.

He doesn't know what peace is, because he's never wanted it. He wants strife in the church, war across the planet, and death to all human life. He wants war and he's going to drag you into one, like it or not.

In Randall J. Brewer's third collection of chapters of *Taken By Storm*, Randall stresses our need to get into the fight with Satan and stay there. When we've won one battle, we need to rest only long enough to regain our strength and...

- Sharpen our swords with the knowledge of the Bible;
- Strengthen our shields of faith through prayer and,
- Go find another fight with Satan.

Don't wait for him to bring the fight to you. Take the storm to him. He's making a noise in your family or community today. Run to the noise.

The only alternative is to purposefully live the life of passive prey in the sights of a skilled hunter.

There is no Plan C.

Paul Baker,
Publisher and Covenant Partner of Randall J. Brewer

INTRODUCTION

NOW IS THE TIME

by Randall J. Brewer

It is hard to put into words the wonderful transformation that has taken place in my life. It's as if the switch controlling the quality of life around me just got turned up as high as it will go. Everything that pertains to me and my circumstances has improved considerably. I feel as if I stepped into some type of glory cloud and everything I touch gets turned into gold. It is unbelievable!

God in His infinite grace and mercy reached down and touched my life and nothing has been the same since. I live a life where, indeed, I go from glory to glory. Higher and higher I am propelled up to the uppermost boundaries of the glory of God. Never have I experienced such a turnaround in all my years of being a Christian. NEVER!

All I can say is that I have been touched by the hand of God, and I have not been disappointed since the day this transformation began. In fact, I cannot wait to go to bed at night so I can quickly wake up in the morning and receive whatever it is the Lord has in store for me that day. I mean

it! I am so enthusiastic for the next day to begin that I average maybe five or six hours a night of sleep. I live a life of constant anticipation that something good is going to happen to me today. And you know what? I haven't been disappointed yet. I am truly a blessed man and am having the best year of my life.

Of course, last year was a great year also, and the year before that. And I know that I know that next year will be better than this year, and the year after that will be better as well. I can hardly contain myself for the overflowing joy and sense of anticipation that engulfs me.

Truly this is an Eph. 3:20 moment, "Now unto Him Who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above what we ask or think." Yes, the critics have been there. One person has accused me of being in "La-La Land." Guilty as charged. Then again, the person who said that was living a miserable life. He didn't know what true happiness was. When I tried to share with him about the joy of the Lord he brushed it off as some sort of

childhood fantasy. Oh well, life is what you make it. All I can say is if this is a dream I'm living in, may I never wake up.

One day as I was basking in the presence of the Lord and taking it all in I heard these words down in my spirit, "Now is the time." Now is the time for what? "Now is the time to take back what the enemy has stolen." It is time to possess the land. It is time to stop wandering aimlessly around the same ole mountain, and go into the enemy's territory and take back what rightfully belongs to us. Yes, now is the time.

The Bible says when a thief is caught he must restore to his victim seven times what he stole from him. I can honestly say that since this turnaround occurred, my life has indeed gotten seven times better. This is not an emotional "high" I'm on, or some "phase" I'm going through. No, this is the real McCoy. It is a spiritual reality. This transformation is ordained by God and that gives longevity to the turnaround that has taken place in my life.

The Bible also says we have to work out our own salvation. We must do the same thing with having a turnaround. We can't get excited about it today and forget

about it tomorrow. No, it must be in the forefront of our thoughts, words, and actions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is what I do and as a result I am being overwhelmed with the favor of God. Yes, the blessings are rolling in. Small blessings! Big blessings! Blessings of every shape and size!

This is all well and good, but we must add some balance here. Without a doubt there is an enemy arrayed against us, a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. This is why we must forever be standing in faith and confessing the Word of God day in and day out. It's a battle worth fighting and the person who wears the victor's crown will be blessed abundantly.

Hear me now! You can have a turnaround in your life, but you must walk it out. You must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Philippians 2:12

You must endure hardship when it comes, and trust me, it will come. *Keep on keeping on.* Press on for the victory is yours! Yes, I am a blessed man but I've had to endure trial after trial. I still do. Life is not all peaches and cream, and the good life will not suddenly fall out of the sky and land in your lap. You must fight for it every step of the way and I

am here to tell you that it a fight worth fighting.

The good news is that we are more than conquerors in Christ, and the goodness of God overwhelms the attacks of the enemy. After all, God has the Name that is above every name. I'm telling you, I know what I'm talking about. I've been there. I've walked it out. You must put your hope in God even when your situation looks hopeless.

Yes, I have been hurt. I bled. I struggled. But....I never, ever gave up. Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning. That's turnaround! Never stop hoping! Never stop believing! Put your circumstances in God's very capable hands and wake up with a smile on your face. Light up every room you walk in to. Don't *ask* yourself how you feel, *tell* yourself how you feel!

Let's face it, a lot of times we can't change our circumstances on our own even if we wanted to. But God can! What we can do, however, is change on the inside and believe for God to change things on the outside.

This works, my friend. I've been down. I've been discouraged. I've been fed up. I've been angry. But, as I've said time and time

again, I never have and I never will give up! I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth and the blessings of life weren't handed to me on a silver platter. No, I had to talk the talk and walk the walk. I had to work out my own salvation.

The world doesn't end if we get knocked down by the enemy. Fine, we get knocked down. So what? The key is to get back up. Wipe the dirt off yourself and keep going forward. Rise up and be blessed! Press on! Now is the time to take back what the enemy has stolen. Start today!

1

THE FIGHT OF FAITH

*"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence,
and the violent take it by force."* Matthew 11:12

God is proclaiming a special message to the body of Christ here in the last days. In fact, it's the same message He's been proclaiming since the dawn of time.

Christians today are not living up to the potential that their faith would allow, and God is saying simply, "Use your faith!" If the truth be told, a sick Christian should be unheard of in the kingdom of God, because Jesus bore our sins on the tree and "by Whose stripes you were healed" ¹

Peter 2:24

Poverty and lack should not be mentioned in the same breath as a Christian, because as Paul

says, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" Phil. 4:19.

JESUS FREED THE SLAVES

Depression and bondage of any kind should have no place in the life of a born again believer. The Word instructs us to "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" Gal. 5:1. The Message® Bible states, "Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you." Jesus Himself said, "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" John 8:36.

Christians everywhere should be living on the high clouds of victory, success, and spiritual fulfillment, because all this has been made available to them.

2 Peter 1:2-4 boldly proclaims,



“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him Who called us to glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

Since God has already given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, a question must now be asked to all those in the kingdom of God. “How determined are you to receive what God has already provided for you? How determined are you? Are you willing “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints” Jude 3? Are you willing to stand up and “fight the good fight of faith” 1 Tim. 6:12?

WINNING IS EVERYTHING

A “good fight” is a fight you win! 1 Cor. 15:57 says that God always causes us to triumph

through the Lord Jesus Christ! There is no failure or defeat in “the good fight of faith.” Most people do not fail, they simply give up trying. They lay back and expect God to do all the fighting for them. Too often people are waiting for God to do something, while *He’s waiting for them* to do something.

People need to understand that they have as much to do with the answer to their prayers as they expect God to be. There is a sign

There’s no failure or defeat in the “good fight of faith.”

on the Colorado River which instructs white water rafters: “If you fall overboard, you must be an active participant

in your own rescue!” For those who have the misfortune of falling into the swirling waters of the raging Colorado River, they must take charge of the situation, even though thousands of gallons of water are flooding over them. They must participate in their own rescue and cannot lay back and let the rescuers do all the work. There is a part they have to play, and so it is in the believer’s walk of faith.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and Jesus said in Mark 4:17 that tribulation and

persecution would arise for the Word's sake.

A TIME FOR ACTION & RESOLUTION

The day will come when the rain will descend, the floods will come, and the wind will blow and beat upon your spiritual house

Matt. 7:25. It is times like these when the born-again believer must take charge of their situation and rise up in their authority and anointing. It is time for action and resolve.

Before entering the Promised Land God told Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses" Josh. 1:3.

God gave the people of Israel the land, but wars would have to be fought before they could possess it. Likewise, God gives us things, but we still have to go get them. There is a part we have to play. God told Jeremiah, "Hear the words of this covenant and do them" Jer. 11:6. James 1:22 says, "But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

DON'T JUST HEAR IT, DO IT

The problem in the body of Christ today is that we are not as much of a "doer" of the Word as we think we are. We think that because we have an abundance of knowledge from the Word of God, and we know what the Bible says about any given situation and we believe what it says, then automatically we become a "doer" of the Word.

This is how people deceive themselves. You have to do more than believe the Word, you have to

put actions to your faith and "do" the Word. To fight the good fight of faith, we must "press in" to the things of God with a persistence

and determination that will not rest satisfied until it receives what is desired. Heb. 10:35,36 AMP says, "Do not, therefore, fling away your fearless confidence for it carries a great and glorious compensation of reward. For you have need of steadfast patience and endurance, so that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God, and thus receive and carry away [and enjoy to the full] what is promised."

Isaiah 53 foretells the

*You have to do more
than [just] believe
the Word.*

redemptive work of Christ on the cross and the things He suffered on our behalf. Afterward, when the work on Calvary is completed, v. 12a tells us, “Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong...” The Amplified® translation says that “He shall divide the spoil with the mighty...” This verse clearly tells us that we must become strong and mighty in order to partake of the abundant riches of the spoil that is available to us.

There is strength to be had in being a Christian and it is faith, and our faith in God that makes us strong. Eph. 3:20 says, “Now to Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...” And what is that strength and power to be used for?

Phil. 4:13 ^{AMP} gives us the answer, “I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me - I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me, [that is, I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency].”

PREPARE TO STAND AND FIGHT

Are you “ready for anything”? Are you prepared to stand and fight for those things that rightfully belong to you? Matt. 11:12 ^{AMP} tells us, “And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time the kingdom of heaven had endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize] - a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought for with most ardent zeal and intense exertion.”

This verse could also be rendered, “The kingdom of heaven is being taken by storm and the strong and forceful ones claim it for themselves eagerly.” It is the responsibility of every Christian who seeks to live a victorious life to storm into the kingdom and take it by force.

Know for certain that there is no place on the victory platform for laid back and easy going Christians. The only place where “success” comes before “work” is in the dictionary.

Phil. 2:12b clearly tells believers to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” In order to live up to the potential

*The kingdom of
heaven is being
taken by storm...*

that our faith would allow, we must go to work, pick up our sword, and fight the good fight of faith. There is no other way.

Paul, in the final chapter of his first letter to Timothy, tells his young and faithful friend to “fight the good fight of faith” ^{1 Tim. 6:12}.

In the opening verses of his second letter to Timothy, Paul once again deals with the same subject. First, he commends Timothy for the “genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also” ^{2 Tim. 1:5}.

Two verses later Paul tells his friend what is needed to fight the good fight of faith. He says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” ^{2 Tim. 1:7}.

The discipline and self-control of a sound mind is needed to win the good fight of faith. 3 John 2 speaks of prosperity of the soul while Paul boldly proclaims in 1 Cor. 2:16b that “...we have the mind of Christ.” Paul tells the church in Rome, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” ^{Rom. 12:2}.

HOW TO RENEW YOUR MIND

Our minds are renewed when we study, feed on, practice, and become doers of the Word.

Phil. 4:8 gives us valuable instructions on how to renew our minds so that we can have the mind of Christ, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of a good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.”

The Amplified® translation says to “think on and weigh and take account of these things - fix your minds on them.” When we keep our minds focused on these things and on the Word of God, we become prosperous in our soul and receive strength in our spirit to fight the good fight of faith.

Is. 26:3,4 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind

*...love is also needed to
fight the good fight of
faith.*

is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.”

Power and love is also needed to fight the good fight of faith. Faith works through love Gal. 5:6, but it is the power of God that brings us the victory when the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy John 10:10.

Peter says that during tests and trials we “are being guarded (garrisoned) by Gods’ power through [your] faith...” 1 Peter 1:5a AMP. Eph. 3:20 says, “Now to Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” The power that works in us is our faith and this is what brings the power of God on the scene. Jer. 1:12 assures us, “Then the Lord said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My Word.’” The word “ready” means to ‘hasten, stand behind, back up, watch over, protect, enforce.’ All the Lord needs to perform and enforce His Word is our faith.

IMITATE OUR FATHER ABRAHAM

We all must become like Abraham who was “fully satisfied and assured that God was able and mighty to keep His Word and to do what He had promised” Rom. 4:21 AMP.

And since it is through our faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God, it goes without saying that our faith will be an open target for the attacks of the enemy.

James 1:2, 3 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces

patience.” Peter says, “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” 1 Peter 1:6, 7.

The Message© Bible says, “I know how great this makes you feel, even though you have to put up with every kind of aggravation in the meantime. Pure gold put

*It’s your faith, not
your gold, that
God will have on
display.*

in the fire comes out of it proved pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out proved genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory."

Since faith comes by hearing the Word of God, the enemy's purpose for bringing tests and trials into your life is to steal the Word of God out of your heart. It is at this time that we must stand up and fight the good fight of faith. Jude 3b says, "... I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

God is looking for a faith that is genuine, and if we don't go through the tests and trials that come our way for the Word's sake, then all we'll be in the kingdom of God is a pretender.

In the parable of the sower Jesus teaches, "And the sower sows the Word. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so they endure only for a time. Afterward, when

tribulations or persecution arises for the Word's sake, immediately they stumble" ^{Mark 4:14, 16, 17.}

Members in the body of Christ must wake up and realize that the days of passive Christianity are over. This Christian life we've been called to is no Sunday picnic and neither is it all peaches and cream. It is a war and we have been called to battle. We cannot ignore the devil, because the devil will not ignore us.

*The days of
passive Christianity
are over.*

1 Peter 5:8
AMP says, "Be well-balanced, temperate, sober-minded; be vigilant and cautious at all times, for that

enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour." So what are we to do when we are attacked by the enemy?

Peter tells us in v. 9a, "Withstand him; be firm in faith [against his onset], - rooted, established, strong, immovable and determined..." This is what it means to fight the good fight of faith.

The availability of the blessings of God are abundant on the earth here in the last days, but instead of growing stronger,

the Church has instead become complacent, indifferent, and unassertive. A lot of people know the Word but only quote it in peace time.

THE GRASHOPPER SYNDROME

Churches are to train people to be an army and fight, but it's sad to say most of them only go through the motions and don't produce anything.

When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, He got the people to cross through the Red Sea, but He couldn't get them over the narrow Jordan River.

The wilderness experience was to be a type of boot camp, preparing the people for war. Instead of believing and adhering to the positive report of Joshua and Caleb, the people instead believed the negative report of the ten other spies and refused to cross over.

The bad report the ten spies brought back from Canaan is that they were like grasshoppers in comparison to the giants in the land ^{Num.13:32, 33}. The children of Israel were held in bondage by the negative words that came out of their mouth.

A person will believe whatever they hear themselves say. The giants didn't keep the Israelites out of Canaan, the grasshoppers did. If we are weak in our own eyes, so will we be weak in the eyes of others.

God got the Israelites out of the bondage of Egypt and into the comfort of the wilderness, but He couldn't get them from the place of comfort into the Promised Land which was a place of war. God assured the people that victory would be theirs, but it wouldn't come automatically. There was a part they had to play.

*Faith never backs up.
It only goes forward.*

Years before, when God told Moses to lift up his rod and split the Red Sea He first told him to "tell the people of Israel to go forward" ^{Ex. 14:15}. God demands participation! Faith without works is dead ^{James 2:17}! Moses had to lift up the rod and the people had to go forward!

Faith never backs up. It only goes forward. When the time came for the children of Israel to enter the Promised Land, they refused to do their part and "go forward" and cross the Jordan River.

The result of their disobe-

dience is that with the exception of Joshua and Caleb that entire generation died off in the wilderness. And why could they not enter in? Because of unbelief ^{Heb. 3:19}. If our faith is to be genuine we must persistently heed the words of Heb. 10:39 ^{NIV} which says, "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved."

Satan has mounted an all out assault against the faith of the brethren, which means we've got to fight for our faith. God never intended for us to run from the devil and his cohorts. Why run from an enemy who was defeated two thousand years ago on Calvary's tree?

Although his future is forever sealed in scripture, the devil still continues his onslaught against the body of Christ, against which we must fight the good fight of faith.

By using the armor of God we must stand up and defend that which is ours. This is what it means to have a warrior spirit. The armor of God ^{Eph. 6:13-17} gives us equipment for our head, our

chest, our loins, and our feet. There is a sword in one hand and a shield in the other. There is no protection for the back, because we are to face the enemy head-on and put him under our feet where he belongs.

WE ARE A MIGHTY PEOPLE

Speaking of the house of Judah, of which we are if we are born-again, Zech. 10:5 ^{AMP} says, "And they shall be as mighty men, treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle and they shall fight because the Lord is with them, and the [oppressors'] riders on horses shall be confounded and put to shame."

David says in Ps. 18:39, "For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me." Our soon coming King is coming back not for a defeated church, but for a victorious body of believers who are "more than conquerors through Him Who loved us" ^{Rom. 8:37}.

Jesus came to earth as the Lamb of God, but will return

*Our soon coming
King is coming back
not for a defeated
church...*

with His followers as the Lion of Judah. Is. 43:12 says, “The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies.”

Jesus was, is, and always will be a winner! The problem with those believers who refuse to “go forward” is that many of them still see Jesus hanging on the cross and have developed a mentality of Him as a dead man who was a loser.

It is time these people start building within themselves a picture of a resurrected Christ Who now sits at the right hand of the Heavenly Father clothed with power and majesty!

The good news is that God wants this same power demonstrated in- and through our lives. The avenue through which He desires to do this is our faith. It is essential, therefore, that we develop a deep hunger and thirst for the Word of God and keep our eyes focused on the “King of kings and Lord of lords” Rev. 19:16.

Jesus said, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life...**” John 14:6a.

Satan will bring persecutions, trials, and afflictions into your life and try to take away from you your hunger for the Word. It is the enemy’s purpose to take your attention away from God and His eternal Word and have you focus on natural things. Do not allow him to prosper in this evil endeavor. Jesus said in John 16:33, “**These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**”

Many [believers] still see Jesus hanging on the cross.

If you are in a struggle then take courage and rejoice because that means you haven’t been defeated yet. Nahum 1:7 says, “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him!” With Jesus as the center of your life you can’t get lost, you can’t be deceived, and the devil can’t kill you.

Those whom God calls, God will defend. He is called El Shaddai, the Almighty One! With Jesus as our King, we can indeed rule in the midst of our enemies.

All this being said, and true, we must not forget that there

is still a battle to be fought. It is called *the good fight of faith*.

Until the day we go home to be with Jesus, we must continually force our way into the kingdom and take it by storm. We need to boldly face our enemy and claim for ourselves the benefits of eternal life in greater fullness.

Eternal life is the crown prepared for us and is to be our encouragement for war.

2

THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH

*“Let us draw near with a true heart
in full assurance of faith.” Heb. 10:22*

Prison is the last place from which to expect a letter of encouragement, but that is where Paul's second letter to Timothy originates.

This was Paul's last epistle before his death and he begins by assuring Timothy of his continuing love and prayers. He reminds his young protege of his spiritual heritage and responsibilities, and that only the one who fights the good fight of faith and perseveres will reap the reward, whether it be a soldier, athlete, farmer, or minister of Jesus Christ.

Fortunately, Timothy had Paul's example to guide him and God's Word to fortify him as he faced the challenges and growing opposition of serving the Lord his God. To win the good fight of faith one must pay close attention to what Paul said in v. 12 of the first chapter,

“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not

ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day.”

Jesus said in Mark 11:22, **“Have faith in God”** and Paul says “I know Whom I have believed...” The heart of Paul's message here is that people put too much emphasis on “what” they believe and not enough on “Who” they believe. This makes all the difference in the world as to whether or not you stand strong on that evil day when the enemy comes and knocks on the door of your life.

How well you know God will determine how well you receive from Him. Indeed, there



is a difference between knowing God and knowing about Him. Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17 and said in v. 3,

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent.”

KNOWING GOD IS EVERYTHING

You don't have eternal life until you “know” God. The Lord said in Jeremiah 9:23,24, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight.”

In John 4 Jesus witnessed to the woman at the well, and so astonished was she at what He said, she immediately left and told the men of the city what had happened. “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when

the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world’” vv. 39-42.

For faith to come, you have to hear from God for yourself.

Eph. 1:13 says,

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in

Whom also having

believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

Our life depends on us hearing from God, and so often we need His assistance in doing this. For this reason we were sealed with the Holy Spirit Who is the Comforter, the Revealer of Truth. It is He who enables you to hear from God and this is how faith comes. Just like those Samaritans who believed the testimony of the woman at the well, so also will the Holy Spirit put His anointing on gifted preachers who proclaim the good news all over the world.

*There is a difference
between knowing
God and knowing
about Him.*

Paul says in Romans 10:14, “How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Never minimize the value of good preaching. Isaiah 52:7 says, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” It is for this reason that we are taught in Hebrews 10:25 to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

FAITH... HOW TO GET IT

A popular verse that instructs us how to get faith is Romans 10:17, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” We should always hear ourselves confess the Word of God and when we believe what we hear ourselves say, faith will come.

However, let’s not overlook the context in which this verse was written. Verse 14b says, “And

how shall they hear without a preacher?” and v. 17 says, “faith comes by hearing.” A preacher is a “proclaimer” and with the call comes the anointing that will allow you to hear things you wouldn’t normally hear. Faith comes by hearing the anointed preaching of the Word, and this is why Jesus said in Matt. 11:15, “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**”

The “anointing” can be described as ‘God on flesh doing only what God can do’ and it isn’t given just so preachers can say nice spiritual things. More than that, it is given so the listener can “hear” and properly discern what’s being said.

An example of this not happening is found in Mark 16. Jesus had just risen from the dead and we read in vv. 9-11,

“Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.”

*Do not forsake
the assembling of
ourselves together.*

Mary Magdalene was no stranger to these mourning disciples and there was no reason for them not to believe her. God, however, in His infinite mercy, was willing to give them another chance to believe. Verses 12, 13 in the same chapter says, "After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either."

These two men were on the road to Emmaus (see also Luke 24:13-48) and notice that scripture says they were "of them" who had been with Jesus. They also were not strangers to all the others. Still, the disciples did not believe their report.

Let's also not forget the famous story of doubting Thomas John 20:24, 25 who also did not believe the others whom the Lord appeared to and talked with. What was the Lord's response to all this? Mark 16:14 tells us, "Afterward He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen."

The Message® Bible says "He appeared and took them to task most severely for their stubborn unbelief, refusing to believe those who had seen Him raised up."

Why does Jesus rebuke unbelief in such a harsh way? Because He "knows" you and He wants you to "know" Him. It is only by grace through faith that you can "know" Him in a deep, personal, and intimate way.

*Jesus knows you
and wants you to
know Him.*

INTIMACY WITH GOD IS FAITH IN GOD

God has a plan and purpose for your life when you truly "know" Him as Lord and Master. Heb. 4:14-16 MSG states, "Now that we know what we have - Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God - let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all - all but the sin. So let's walk right up to Him and get what He is ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help."

King James says in v. 16, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to

help in time of need.” Boldness is needed to fight the good fight of faith and it comes when you know God in an intimate way. David was a man after God’s own heart and you can hear the boldness in what he told the giant Goliath...

“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you.

And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel” ^{1 Samuel 17:45,46}.

Concerning God, Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, “in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him” ^{Eph. 3:12}. Having confidence eliminates all doubt from your life and allows you to forever walk in faith. When you’re confident, you’re bold, and when you’re bold you’ll be sure that God will do what He says He will do.

Just as it is impossible to please God without faith ^{Heb. 11:6}, so also is it impossible to please Him without confidence and boldness.

Put your wavering and questioning aside.

Don’t wonder any more and don’t try to believe. Just do it! If you are in faith, you will have confidence and you will know- that you know- that you know. If you are not sure that God will move on your behalf, then you are in trouble. You win the good fight of faith by being sure.

The word “faith” means ‘to be firm, stable, to build up and support.’

Faith will build under you a firm foundation and is something to stand on without fear of falling. It is a spiritual force that you can lean on, depend on, and rest your weight upon without concern that it will collapse under you or let you down. It means ‘to be certain, to be true, permanent, established, to believe in or to trust.’

A person of faith is a bold person, and because your confidence is in God you can speak openly and freely. There will be no uncertainty in your heart, thus allowing you to speak

...so also is it impossible to please [God] without confidence and boldness.

plainly without reservation and hesitation. This is what David did when he faced the giant in the Valley of Elah. When you are bold and have confidence in God, you are unstoppable and no enemy can prevent you from going all the way with God.

BE FREE OF DOUBT

When you fight the good fight of faith, you must finish the same way you began. Matthew 14:22-32 tells the story of how Peter and the other disciples were on the sea in the midst of a storm and Jesus was not with them. In the fourth watch of the night they saw Jesus walking on the water and they were troubled and cried out in fear. Jesus immediately spoke out to them saying, **“Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”** And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” When Jesus told him to **“come,”** Peter, with boldness and reckless abandon, went down out of the boat and walked on the water to go to Jesus. Notice what happened next. Verse 30 says, “But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was

afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’”

Peter began with boldness but ended in fear and unbelief. Jesus always responded to the disciple’s unbelief and we read in verse 31, “And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, **‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’**”

Doubt is the lack of confidence that God will do what He said He would do, and will cause boldness to flee from your life. Do not fall into the trap of believing that, to walk in faith all you have to do is make faith confessions. You can confess something all day long and not believe in your heart that it will come to pass. Never say something out of desperation, because chances are you won’t believe it anyway.

To walk in faith you must confess the Word and not doubt in your heart. If you don’t truly believe it down in your heart, then it’s best not to say anything at all.

James 1:5,6 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will

You must finish the fight the same way you began the fight.

be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.”

The word “doubt” comes from the word ‘double’ and James continues in verses 7,8, “For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Doubt will make your words powerless, null and void. You may be saying the right things but are not fully convinced down in your heart that it will come to pass.

***People who waver can't
make up their minds
what they believe.***

Like a wind tossed wave they'll be up one minute and down the next. One minute they believe and the next they don't. You can't travel in two different directions at once. Doubt is a serious enemy to your faith and it will prevent you from receiving the will and provision of the Lord.

THE SOLUTION TO DOUBT

The solution to doubt is to

be single-minded. Ephesians 4:4-6 says, “There is...

ONE

one body and
one Spirit, just as you
were called in,
one hope of your calling;
one Lord,
one faith,
one baptism,
one God and Father of
all, Who is above all,
and through all, and in
you all.”

Not two! **One!**
Faith begins where the will of
God is known, so
you must refuse to
consider anything
else.

Romans 15:5
says, “Let each one
be fully convinced
in his own mind.” You've got to
be stable. Stop being of two minds
and become settled and unmoved
in your faith in God. Continue to
study and pray until confidence
rises up inside of you.

If you are single-minded,
the Word of God has to come
to pass in your life. When you
believe without a doubt, you will
receive without delay, without fail.
God said you would receive what
you say if you doubt not ^{Acts 8:37}.

WORRY STOPS FORWARD MOTION

When you cast doubt out of your life, you will not fret or have anxiety about anything ^{Phil. 4:6}. If you are worrying, then you are doubting, and the Bible states in Matthew 6:25, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” Worry is worldly and it will get you no where. In fact, it only makes the situation worse.

The more you worry, the worse it gets. Peter learned this lesson well when he began to sink in his quest to walk out to Jesus on the water. Worry chokes the Word and will choke Jesus out of your life.

The devil is the author of alternate choices. In the Garden of Eden he offered Adam and Eve a different lifestyle than the one God intended. Likewise, he wants you to live a life of worry and doubt instead of a life of faith and confidence. Therefore, never worry about anything.

Instead, cast all your care on Jesus ^{1 Peter 5:7,8} and fight the good

fight of faith. The Amplified® Bible says, “casting the whole of your care, all of your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and He cares about you watchfully.”

The Living Bible® translates Peter’s words this way, “Let Him have all your worries and cares for He’s always thinking about you, and watching everything that concerns you.” When you do this, confidence will come and

with it the boldness to fight and win the good fight of faith. Remember, Jesus never worried about anything and neither should we.

The author of Hebrews tells us, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is

*Worry is worldly
and it will get you
nowhere.*

faithful” (Hebrews 10:19-23).

We then read in verse 35 of the same chapter, “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.” You can boldly have confidence that good things will happen in your life. Faith draws near, so never draw back and play it safe. Live confidently and always encourage yourself in the Lord knowing that He cares for you.

DON'T BE PASSIVE, BE POSSESSIVE!

Paul told Timothy, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life...” ^{1 Tim. 6:12a}

The Message® Bible says, “Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to...”

The Greek word for “lay hold” is ‘take,’ so stand up and take what God says you can have.

Consider the woman with the issue of blood. She didn’t stand in the back of the crowd and do nothing. No, with boldness she pushed through the crowd, pressed in, and *took* her healing. She had confidence and the full assurance of faith that if she could but touch the hem of His garment

she would be healed. She fought and won the good fight of faith and was completely set free from her ailment.

You, too, can receive from God. With confidence that is sure and bold you must believe that you take what belongs to you. You have to lay hold! People who possess the promises are not weak and passive, they’re bold and aggressive. God gave the people the promised land, but they had to go in and possess it. God provides

what you want and need, but you must rise up and possess it.

***You must possess
your possessions.***

*He cares for you
affectionately and
He cares for you
watchfully.*

N e h e m i a h 9 tells us, “Moreover You gave them kingdoms and nations, and divided them into districts. So they took possession of the land...” ^{v. 22}. “So the people went in and possessed the land” ^{v. 24}. “And they took strong cities and a rich land, and possessed houses full of all goods, cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and grew fat, and delighted themselves in Your great goodness” ^{v. 25}.

The blessings of God are forever available, but they won’t

fall on you from out of nowhere. No, you must go and possess them. When the manna fell in the wilderness, the people still had to go pick it up. They learned that if you don't take it, you won't get it.

It is interesting to note that the word “possess” is used over 300 times in scripture with none as meaningful as Numbers 13:30, “Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, ‘Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.’”

Caleb knew what it took to fight the good fight of faith. He knew that God provides His blessings by grace but you must go in and possess them with the full assurance of faith, a faith that is bold and confident. Likewise, if you know what belongs to you, then it's time to rise up and go get it. Like Caleb, take possession of what is yours.

3

THE PERSISTENCE OF FAITH

"In due season will reap if we do not lose heart." Gal. 6:9a

Veteran newscaster Paul Harvey once said, "You can tell when you're on the road to success, because it's usually uphill all the way."

And so it is with the believer who has been anointed by God to be co-laborers with Him. Know with certainty that your trial is no accident. Satan has issued an assault against the beloved children of God and it's going to get worse the closer we get to the end of the age.

The good news is that, in the midst of a mega-storm, Jesus can give you a mega-calm. We read in 1 Peter 1:6-10, "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, Whom having

not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls."

To the early church Peter was a breath of fresh air and his influence was enormous and acknowledged by all. His letters reveal to us the qualities of Jesus that the Holy Spirit wants to shape in all of us. God wants all believers to have a readiness to embrace suffering rather than prestige, wisdom developed from experience rather than a book, and a humility that lacks nothing in vigor and imagination.



Peter had all these qualities and was so humble that, when he was put to death by crucifixion, he asked to be hung upside down instead of upright like the Lord had been. And it was this same apostle who tells us that our faith will be “tested by fire.”

THE MEASURE OF GOD

The Message® Bible records Peter’s words this way, “What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have Him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we’ve been given a brand new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven - and the future starts now! God is keeping careful watch over us and the future. The Day is coming when you’ll have it all - life healed and whole. I know how great this makes you feel, even though you have to put up with every kind of aggravation in the meantime. Pure gold put in the fire comes out proved pure; genuine faith put through their suffering comes out proved genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it’s your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of His victory. You never

Jesus is the basis for the Christian’s living hope and inheritance.

saw Him, yet you love Him. You still don’t see Him, yet you trust Him - with laughter and singing. Because you kept on believing, you’ll get what you’re looking forward to: total salvation” ^{1 Peter 1:3-9}.

This epistle presents Christ as the believer’s example and hope in times of suffering in a spiritually hostile world. Jesus is the basis for the Christian’s “living hope” and “inheritance” ^{1 Peter 1:3, 4}, and the love relationship available with Him by faith is a source of inexpressible joy ^{v. 8}.

His suffering and death provide redemption for all who trust in Him. He is the Chief Shepherd and Overseer of all believers, and when He appears, those who know Him will be glorified.

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS INCREASING

Peter addresses this epistle to those believers who are pilgrims in a world that is growing increasingly hostile to those anointed by God. Knowing that his readers will be facing more persecution than ever before, Peter writes this letter to give them a divine perspective on these trials

so that they will be able to endure them without wavering in their faith.

They should not be surprised at their ordeal, because Jesus also suffered and died and they should count it a privilege to share in the sufferings of Christ.

He goes on to exhort them to be sure their hardships are not being caused by their own wrongdoings, but rather for their Christian testimony. Peter wants all of us to not be overcome with attitudes of bitterness and anxiety, but instead replace those negative feelings with confidence in God. By standing firm in the grace of God through faith, we'll all be able to endure the fiery trials that all of us are sure to face.

Yes, you've got to fight for your faith, and Paul told Timothy that if you don't, you'll suffer shipwreck in your ability to believe God. 1 Tim. 1:18b,19 ^{MSG} says, "All those prayers are coming together now so you will do this well, fearless in your struggle, keeping a firm grip on your faith and on yourself. After all, this is a fight we're in. There are some, you know, who by relaxing their grip and thinking anything goes have made a thorough mess of their

faith."

A stern warning is given in Heb. 3:12, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." In this verse faith that has been shipwrecked is called "an evil heart of unbelief."

The Message® Bible says, "So watch your step, friends. Make sure there's no evil unbelief lying around that will trip you up and throw you off course, diverting you from the living God."

*You have to fight for
your faith.*

AVOIDING THE PROMISED LAND

This verse was written in response to the story of those who refused to enter into the Promised Land after being rescued from the bonds of slavery in Egypt. They could not enter into the rest of God because of unbelief. When their faith got tested, their hearts got hardened. They suffered shipwreck with their faith. They did not understand that having faith is not the absence of distress, trials, or heaviness of heart. Faith is about whether or not you'll go forward with Jesus and cross over into your own personal Promised Land. God wants to bring you into a place of total dependence on

Jesus, where all your confidence is in Him and not your own ability.

Num. 13:30,31 tells what was said when the twelve spies returned from the land of promise and shows a stark contrast between faith and unbelief. "Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.' But the men who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.'"

Unbelief says "we are not able" whereas faith says "we are well able." If you are weak in your own eyes, so will you be weak in the devil's eyes.

GOLIATHS EVERYWHERE

The Christian life is full of giants, and there are strongholds and walled cities everywhere you look. This is what the battle of faith is all about. Don't let the giants in your life scare you and cause you to run away. People who want to take the easy route don't enter in. Understand that...

Your problems are not there to keep you down,

but instead are there to keep you out of that place where you have absolute confidence in Jesus.

Faith is a daring, reckless abandon to the absolute, ultimate power of Jesus Christ to keep you and sustain you in this present age. It brings you to a place where you're resting in His faithfulness, and you'll have no doubt that God's eternal purpose for your life will be fulfilled.

We all have dreams, desires, and visions to take us beyond where we're at now, but those dreams don't come to pass immediately. The desire

to quit will be one of the major temptations the enemy will bring against you but God says to enter in to your promised land. Press on and never give up! Trust Jesus and be determined to press through to the end.

INHERIT THE PROMISES WITH PATIENCE

You were not anointed with the power of God so you could quit. The journey is not easy but it's worth the challenges that go along with it. And remember,

If you are weak in your own eyes, so will you be weak in the devil's eyes.

it's those who finish the race that get the prize. When you have a passion for what you're doing it will override the negative circumstances that rise up against you. Is. 41:10 says, "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Probably the first thing a person learns when they make a quality decision to live by faith is that, the answer to their prayers is almost never manifested immediately. The Bible says that it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God Heb. 6:12. Timing is of the utmost importance when it comes to receiving from God.

All believers need the confident assurance that God is never late when it comes to answering our prayers. On the other hand, neither is He early. Patience, therefore, is what God uses to keep us in His timing and faith is our positive response to His ability to perform what He has promised Rom. 4:21.

Jesus, when informed of the

sickness of His friend Lazarus, stayed two more days in the place where He was. His explanation for His delay in going to the scene of His friend's eventual death is found in John 11:14,15a, "Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sake that I was not there, that you may believe.'"

LEARNING THE WALK OF FAITH

Going through a phase of waiting from the time you first believe to the time of manifestation will build your faith and help you to believe to a greater degree.

It is during this time of waiting that persistence and tenacity needs to be built up in the life of all believers who sincerely wish to walk by faith.

Faith that is persistent, is faith that gets the job done. It is a quality of faith that forces it's way into the kingdom, takes it by storm, and remains there and does not rest satisfied until it receives what it is believing for.

Persistence is the power of continuing in some effort of course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition.

*Faith that is persistent,
is faith that gets the job
done.*

It means to be...

Steadfast in purpose;

To pursue to an end;

To go on stubbornly;

To remain unchanged in the repetition of a test or trial;

To stay fixed on a character;

To hang on tenaciously.

The word “tenacious” means ‘to be tough.’ Persistent faith is tough faith and doesn’t look at the failures of the past, but at the promises of the Word of God. It is a faith that refuses to be denied. The story of Caleb going in to the Promised Land is a tale of a man who did not let go of a promise made to him many years before.

TAKING POSSESSION

With possessive boldness the old man Caleb stood before his long time friend Joshua who was now leader of the Israeli people and made the proclamation, “Give me this mountain!”

Like Joshua, Caleb had been one of the twelve spies Moses sent into the Promised Land to spy

out the land of Canaan. Caleb reminds Joshua of this in Josh. 14:7, “I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.” Ten of the twelve spies brought back an evil report saying, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we” Num. 13:31.

They later said in v. 33, “We were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” Caleb and Joshua, however, came back with a good report. “Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, ‘Let us go up at once and take possession for we are well able to overcome it’” Num. 13:30.

Because of his good report, Caleb now reminds Joshua of a promise made to him by Moses, “So Moses swore on that day saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children’s forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God’” Josh. 14:9.

The old generation of murmuring and disbelieving

Persistent faith is tough faith and doesn't look at the failures of the past.

Israelites had died off in the wilderness, and now the new generation, along with Joshua and Caleb, were ready to take possession of the Promised Land.

Caleb was now eighty-five years old and he felt he was still just as strong as he had been when he went into Canaan as a spy. The land now had rest from war and Caleb was ready to go on with his life. Before Joshua divided the Promised and among the other tribes, he would give his faithful friend first choice of what land he wanted.

FIGHT FOR THE PROMISES

As his inheritance, Caleb had chosen Mount Hebron where a race of giants called the Anakims still had control of the land. Moses had promised him a place of his own and now he wanted to take over that land.

Josh. 14 tells us, “Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, ‘You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. As yet, I am as strong this day as I was on the day

Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.’ And Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance” Josh 14:6, 11-13.

Caleb would have to force his way into [what was rightfully his] and take it by storm.

In order for Caleb to take possession of his inheritance, he would have to

once again go to war and risk his life and those of his men. To gain what was rightfully his, Caleb would have to force his way onto the mountain and *take it by storm*. Josh. 15 goes on to tell us that this is precisely what he did.

For those of us living today under the new covenant, Mount Hebron might symbolize any one of the many blessings God promises us in His Word. The promises available to us today are greater than those in the day of Joshua and Caleb.

2 Peter 1:4a says, 'by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises.' We may not be living in the Promised Land but we are living in the land of promises. The good news is found in 2 Cor. 1:20 which says, "For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." Notice that God gets glory when we partake of His promised blessings. Because of this verse and our relationship with Jesus Christ, we can boldly go before the throne of God and say, "Give me this mountain! It's mine! Your Word promised it to me and I take possession of it now! In the Name of Jesus Christ I believe I receive! So be it!" Hallelujah!

All faith needs is "Thus saith the Lord..." Caleb held on to the promise of God and waited forty-five years to receive his inheritance. Sad to say, most people give up if they have to wait forty-five days, or for that matter forty-five hours.

Like Caleb, we must all learn Paul's message in Gal. 6:9. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

The Message® Bible states, "So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit."

The mountain is yours! Do not lose possession of it because of a simple thing called "time". Be like David who said in Ps. 31:14,15a, "But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, You are my God. My times are in your hand..."

If you have made Jesus the Lord of your life, then also make Him the Lord of your time. You can trust Him. He will not let you down. And if you do not lose heart you can count on Him to give you your mountain. Receive it today!

*All faith needs is
"Thus saith the Lord."*

THE STAND OF FAITH

“...and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore...” Eph 6:13a, 14a

Satan is a despicable foe and he doesn't fight fair. If given the chance, he'll stab you in the back and kick you when you're down. He hates faith and he'll do anything and everything he can to make it ineffective in your life.

Rev. 12:1-4 teaches us the ways of this fallen angel, “Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

Then being with Child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.

And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.”

The Message® Bible translation says, “The dragon crouched before the woman in childbirth, poised to eat up the Child when it came.”

Likewise, the devil wants to eat you up! Anytime a person tries to give birth to a God-given vision by using their faith, Satan will be right there trying to devour the “Child.”

In the parable of the sower Jesus said, “The sower sows the Word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the Word is sown. And when they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts” Mark 4:14,15.



When does the enemy come to steal your vision and your faith? Immediately!

THE ENEMY COMES ONLY TO STEAL, KILL, AND DESTROY

An example of this happening is seen in the old testament book of Ezra. This book continues where Second Chronicles ends and shows how God fulfilled His promise to return His people to the land of promise after seventy years of exile.

Ezra was a godly man marked by a strong trust in the Lord, moral integrity, and a deep grief over sin. He knew God was with His people and although their days of glory seem to be over, their spiritual heritage still remained.

The basic theme of Ezra is the restoration of the temple and the spiritual, moral, and social restoration of the returned remnant in Jerusalem. We read in Ezra 4:1,2, "Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the Lord God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to

them, 'Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.'"

Deception is one of Satan's most often used tactics as he tries to eat you up and if he can't hinder you directly he'll try to sneak in through the back door. Jesus exposed this evil scheme of the enemy in the parable of the wheat and tares.

He said in Matt. 13:24, 25,

Deception is one of Satan's most often used tactics.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men

slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."

This is what happened here in the story of Ezra. Immediately Satan sent the adversaries of God's people to get involved with what *they* wanted to do. Satan always opposes you when you're birthing or building. If you're doing nothing for God he'll leave you alone, because you are not a threat to him.

We read in Gal. 5:9, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." The Message® Bible says, "It only takes a minute amount of yeast,

you know, to permeate an entire loaf of bread.” In the Bible leaven is never used to symbolize anything good see ^{Mark 8:15}.

What Paul is telling us is that one bad apple will indeed spoil an entire basket of good apples. The leaders in Ezra’s time knew this and responded in v. 3,

“But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers’ houses of Israel said to them, ‘You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us.’”

These leaders knew that yeast may be a small thing but it works its way through a whole batch of bread pretty fast. It’s the small foxes that spoil the vine. 1 Cor.. 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.” If they would have accepted the offer of their adversaries, it is a sure reality that the temple of God would not have been rebuilt.

The devil won’t appear to be opposing you if you let him get involved, but do not be deceived. He is a thief who comes to kill, steal, and destroy and he did not

stop his efforts to hinder the work of God’s people:

“Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia” ^{Ezra 4:4,5}.

Jesus said in Rev. 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” People everywhere love this verse and the sentimental value it brings, but they also need to realize that *Satan is saying the exact same thing*. The devil is also knocking on the door of your life. The devil don’t bother folks who don’t bother him, however, if you and your faith are a threat to him, for sure he’ll come knocking at your door. Believe it. Expect it.

*“Do not be deceived:
Evil company corrupts
good habits.”*

THE COLOR OF EVIL

Jesus said of the devil, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he

speaks from his own resources,
for he is a liar and the father of it”

John 8:44

Satan is the master of deception, he comes as an angel of light, and we are to never, ever let him get involved in our personal lives and that which we desire to do for the Lord.

James 4:7 says, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” We need to steadfastly resist the enemy, but you’re not going to be able to exercise any power and authority over Satan until you first submit yourself to God.

We need to be radically and outrageously obedient to God and His Word. Phil. 2:8 says Jesus humbled Himself and became extremely obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

***Don’t let the devil steal
your vision and the faith
you have.***

Overcome him by the power of the Word and the word of your testimony.

Paul tells us to “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong”

1 Cor. 16:13. The Message® Bible says, “Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you’ve got, be resolute, and love without stopping.”

STAND YOUR GROUND

Yes, sometimes it is lonely at the top, but you and Jesus will always be a majority. If God be for us, who can be against us ^{Romans 8:31}? ***So stand your ground!*** Protect what is yours!

Eph. 6:13b, 14a says, “...and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore...” David had three mighty warriors who did just that. Soldiers in the time of

David were professional warriors whose job it was to protect and defend the honor of the king. His wish was their command.

Once, when David was driven out of the city of Bethlehem and forced to live in the stronghold of the cave of Adullam, he said in longing, “Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!” ^{2 Sam. 23:15}.

At the time, Bethlehem was the garrison of the evil Philistine army. Nevertheless, when three of David’s men heard the desire of

***“Resist the devil and
he will flee from you.”***

their king, they went down and broke through the enemy's camp, drew water from the well, and brought it back to David. Because these three brave men risked their lives to satisfy the thirst of their king, David refused to drink the water and instead poured it out as an offering to the Lord ^{2 Sam. 23:16}.

Just who were these three men who served under David? What was the special quality in their character that earned them eternal recognition as David's "mighty men"? As we shall see, each of these three men performed heroic feats in battle with tenacious determination that allowed each of them to come out victorious and receive the honor of being called "mighty."

THE STANDARD OF GOD

They refused to run when the going got tough, as the children of Israel did when challenged by the giant Goliath. They stood their ground and fought a good fight, because the honor of their king would be determined by the outcome of their battle.

One of these men was

called Adino the Eznite and he was chief among the captains of David's army of mighty men. One day he went to war and killed eight hundred men at one time ^{2 Sam. 23:8}. With unrelenting tenacity and aggressiveness, he vigorously fought on until the last enemy was overtaken and destroyed. The magnitude and vastness of this great victory is beyond human comprehension.

Adino was a true warrior and for him defeat was not an option. Like Gideon, this man can also be called "a mighty man of valor."

The word "might" means to 'have the ability to do anything,' and any man who can stand his ground and kill eight hundred men at one time has earned the right to be called "mighty."

In a similar story, King Jehoshaphat once went to war and was outnumbered by great proportions, and this is what the Lord said to him, "Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's" ^{2 Chron. 20:15}.

Another time a wicked king once sent horses and chariots and

*We need to be
radically and
outrageously obedient
to God and His Word.*

a great army to surround a city occupied by the prophet Elisha. When informed by his servant of this evil deed, the man of God said, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them” ^{2 Kings 6:16}. The great prophet then asked the Lord to open the eyes of his young servant who then saw that the mountains was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

The battle indeed is the Lord's. Is 59:19b ^{AMP} assures us, “When the enemy shall come in, like a flood the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him and put him to flight - for He will come like a rushing stream which the breath of the Lord drives.”

2 Sam. 23:9,10 gives the description of another of David's mighty men, “And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that

day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.”

Notice in v. 9 that when the time for battle came the men of Israel retreated. They ran away and refused to fight for their king and for what rightfully belonged to them. In Ps. 78:9-11 we read, “The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God; they refused to walk in His law, and forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them.”

*“Like a flood the Spirit
of the Lord will lift
up a standard against
[your enemy].”*

These people, just like the men with Eleazar, were well able to be victorious, but instead of fighting they turned back.

Likewise, those who try to live a lifestyle of faith will oftentimes, in the face of contradictory circumstances, waver in their faith and give up, thus forfeiting the victory and promise of God that rightfully belongs to them.

PANIC: A DEADLY REACTION

The thing that causes people to retreat and not “go forward”

when tests and trials come for the Word's sake is panic. Panic is nothing more than distrust, which is the exact opposite of faith. It is a sudden, unreasonable, overpowering fear.

When overtaken by panic, a person will begin to react and respond in the natural rather than in the spiritual. Peter panicked when he was walking on the water toward Jesus and began to sink. He took his eyes off Jesus, Who is the Living Word, and focused instead on the stormy circumstances around him.

People who panic will retreat in the day of battle and will not "go forward." What, then, should a person do? The same thing Eleazar did! He grabbed onto his sword and wouldn't let go. He was tired from all the fighting and his hand was weary, but still, he wouldn't let go of the one thing that, for him, represented the difference between life and death, victory and defeat.

Eph. 6:17 tells us that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. The worst thing you can do when the pressure is on is throw down your sword and retreat. Ps. 68:1a says, "Let God arise, let His

enemies be scattered..." Since God is represented by His Word, this verse can also be rendered, "Let the Word of God arise, let the enemies of His Word be scattered."

Eleazar refused to drop his sword. He was so determined that he was going to be victorious that his hand clung to his sword until God had given him a great victory. When it was all over, his comrades had to pry his hand off his sword.

Panic is nothing more than distrust, the opposite of faith.

If we are to live a victorious life as a successful believer, where we force our way into the kingdom of God and take it by storm, we must have the same attitude and determination as Eleazar. We need to grab hold of the Word of God and refuse to let go of our faith. This persistence will give us the ability and strength to "go forward" and not panic in the day of battle.

And if we will stand our ground and fight the good fight of faith God, like He did with Eleazar, will bring about a great victory in our day of battle.

The last of David's three mighty men is described in 2 Sam. 11,12, "And after him was

Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. Then the people fled from the Philistines. But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. And the Lord brought about a great victory.”

Once again we see the Philistine army arrayed in battle against the people of Israel. This time the enemy had gathered near a field of beans and the people of Israel, as they had done with Eleazar, had fled at the time of battle.

IF IT’S YOURS, FIGHT FOR IT

One man, however, decided to stand his ground and fight for what was his. Shammah stationed himself in the middle of the field, and boldly proclaimed, “This bean patch is mine! This harvest belongs to me!” Shammah made up his mind that this bean patch belonged to him and no man or army was going to take it away from him. Shammah stood his ground and single-handedly fought the enemy until the Lord gave him a great victory.

God made a special promise

to the children of Israel in Deut. 20:1, “When you go to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God is with you, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

Verse 4 of the same chapter says, “for the Lord your God is He Who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”

Shammah understood this and he won his war, because he decided that he was going to keep what was his and that he would not

panic.

Knowing that the battle was the Lord’s, Shammah fought a good fight and won. His bean field, like the mountain that belonged to Caleb, represents all the blessings and promises of God that are available to all who will believe. When one commits themselves to live and walk by faith, it does not take them long to realize that, like Shammah, sometimes you have to fight for the things that already belong to you.

For certain, the day will come when you will have to stand

*“This harvest
belongs to me.”*

your ground and fight the good fight of faith.

It would be interesting to find out what happened to those people who ran away the day Eleazar and Shammah went to war. Jesus said in Luke 9:62, “**No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**”

Like those who were in the company of David’s three mighty men, all too often many Christians will run away and give up on something the minute their faith is tried. They fall by the wayside and relinquish their faith, because they fail to recognize that it is Satan who is trying to keep them from receiving the blessings God has promised in His Word.

THE REWARD OF THE RETREAT

Prov. 24:10 says, “If you faint in the day of adversity your strength is small.” The sad part is that the answer to their prayers and confessions of faith is usually waiting on their doorstep ready to be received when they decide to give up and run away on the day

of battle.

So what happened to those Israelites who decided to retreat instead of heeding the call to “go forward”? Perhaps the answer can be found when we consider what happened to the people of Ephraim who also ran away on the day of battle ^{Ps. 78:9}.

The book of Hosea says, “Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked by human precept” ^{Hosea 5:9a,11}.

- “O Ephraim, what shall I do to you?... For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud and like the early dew it goes away” ^{Hosea 6:4}.
- “Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without sense...” ^{Hosea 7:11a}.
- “Woe to them, for they have fled from Me! Destruction to them, because they have transgressed against Me! Though I redeemed them, they have spoken lies against Me” ^{Hosea 7:13}.

So what happens to those who run away on the day of battle? Need anymore be said?

All too often many Christians will run away and give up.

To the surprise of many, there are several fighting warriors listed in the Hebrews 11 “Hall of Fame” of faith. Names such as Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthab, and David ^{v. 32} grace the pages of this chapter to be an example to us all. These are men who fought a good fight and did not run away on the day of battle. These are warriors “who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens”

Heb. 11:33,34

THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

Make no mistake about it. Christianity is a confrontation and we must all realize that, there are no victories when there are no wars! We must, therefore, develop within ourselves a warrior spirit so that we can force our way into the kingdom and take it by storm.

With determined confidence we can boldly proclaim,

- “I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me”

Phil. 4:13

- “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us”

Rom. 8:37

- “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” ^{Luke 18:27}

- “Greater is He Who is in me than he who is in the world”

1 John 4:4

The day of battle means greater victories, because as 1 Cor. 15:57 says,

Christianity is a confrontation.

- “But thanks be to God Who gives us the victory in Christ Jesus.”

- We are told in Is. 54:17 that “no weapon formed against you shall prosper.”

- Rom. 8:31b says, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Because of who we are in Christ, the persistent believer with a warrior spirit can just as easily say, “If God be for us, who cares who is against us?” Unlike those mighty men from the Old Testament, we are today engaged in a different type of battle. Eph. 6:12 ^{AMP} says, “For we not wrestling with flesh and blood - contending only with

physical opponents - but against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere.”

UNCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Neither do we use natural weapons such as a sword, spear, or the jawbone of an ass. 2 Cor. 10:3-5 says, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

The battle is still the Lord’s and our weapons today consist of the mighty Name of Jesus, His shed blood, and the Word of God. The good news is that the victory has already been won. In His death, burial, and resurrection, Christ “disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them,

triumphing over them in it” Cor. 2:15.

Christ did not run away on the day of battle, although He was tempted to do so in the Garden of Gethsemane. Heb. 12:3 says, “For consider Him Who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

Christ faced the enemy and reduced them to nothing ^{1 Cor. 2:6} and as a result of His obedience to the point of death, even the death of the cross, God has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name ^{Phil. 2:8,9}.

*For the weapons of
our warfare are not
carnal, but mighty
in God.*

Today, He is seated at the right hand of God waiting for us to do the same thing He did. Christ is “waiting till His enemies are made His footstool” ^{Heb. 10:13}, and this happens when we stand our ground and fight the good fight of faith.

It is encouraging to know that we are fighting a defeated foe and one day we will gaze at the devil, consider him, and say, “Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the

house of his prisoners?” Is. 14:16,17 .

Because the battle has already been won, then victory is assured every time we fight the good fight of faith. If we will trust God and “go forward” there is no way we can lose.

So, what are we waiting for?
Let the battle begin!

Randall J. Brewer has been faithfully serving the Lord since the day he first bowed his knees before Him in the summer of 1974.

Since that time Randall has stepped through every door that the Lord has opened for him and over time he has been involved with a children's ministry, a teenage street ministry, and has led a Christian singles ministry. He has been involved with an outreach to those in prison and many inmates have been blessed as the result of his efforts.

Randall has also managed a church bookstore, has been the substitute host of a three hour Christian radio program, and has taught Bible classes at church and hosted many home cell groups.

Recently the Lord had him write the eye opening story "Heaven: The Great Adventure" with the promise that it would open doors all over the world, giving those who read the message the incentive to grow closer and stronger in their own personal walk with the Lord. Since the completion of this book, Randall's work has been translated into several languages, and invitations have come in to teach all over the world.



Randall and his beautiful wife Anne Marie have been bonded together by one God, with one love, for one purpose. They know firsthand the trials and pain that come with having a sincere desire to serve the Lord.

The result of going through many harsh battles is that the Lord has anointed them to lift up and exhort those who are also serving the Lord and going through similar circumstances.

Their mission in life is to encourage all believers to rise up in the midst of their adversity and become all they were meant to be in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Their heartfelt prayer is that once you read this book, your life will never be the same.

BACK