

Prayer: Christ's Weapon of Choice

04/15/2018

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:28-54

Christ has called us into His army to fight a war that is spiritual in nature. As He chooses us, He also chooses our weapons. They are not the weapons of conventional warfare (II Timothy 2:3-4; Ephesians 6:10-17; II Corinthians 10:3-5 cp. John 18:36). Let's try to learn a few things about spiritual warfare from some events that happened the night Jesus was betrayed, illegally tried, and condemned to death on the cross. Jesus taught us to "watch and pray" (Matthew 26:41; Mark 13:33; 14:38; Luke 21:36). How was Jesus looking at things that important night?

Looking Forward – Luke 22:28-30

Christ has plans – not problems. He always has something for which we can look forward. See Mark 10:28-30; Romans 8:15-18; Philippians 3:20-21; Titus 2:11-14.

Looking Carefully – Luke 22:31-32

Satan also has plans, but Christ is always ahead of them. He prays for our protection and strength. The calamities that Satan plans turn into conversion moments for our future growth and service. See Romans 8:26-39; II Corinthians 12:7-10; James 4:7; I John 2:12-14; 4:4.

Looking Truthfully – Luke 22:33-34

We imagine great things that we'd like to do for Christ. Even if we are as sincere as Peter (Luke 22:50 cp. John 18:10-11), we are in for surprises about ourselves. Remember, we do not surprise the Lord. He already knows everything about us, but amazing grace – Christ still affirms His love to us and His desire to bless us and use us. See Psalm 23; 37:23-24; 139; Philippians 3:12-15; Hebrews 4:12-16; I John 1:5 – 2:2.

Looking Practically – Luke 22:35-38

There was a special time of provision, while they were in training. But now, Jesus is preparing them to be ready to take care of themselves. He will be taken from them and they will need to move on. The sword mentioned (and the two swords) was not to start a military insurrection. It was for simple, personal protection on the highways. This will be abused later, and the Lord will correct the problem (Luke 22:40-50 cp. Matthew 26:51-54). There is a divine purpose for the changes that are about to take place. See Philippians 4:11-13; II Corinthians 6:3-10.

Looking Prayerfully – Luke 22:39-40

Jesus had a special place in which he regularly resorted to pray. The habit of regular prayer makes it easier to pray when there are special needs and crises. This is the weapon of Christ's choice. See II Thessalonians 3:1-2; Psalm 5:1-3; 55:16-17; 63:1; 141:1-2.

Looking Passionately – Luke 22:41-44

The Lord showed more exertion and gave more time in prayer than in any other activity. Preaching and miracles seemed effortless for Him, but prayer caused Him to labor and sometimes agonize. Let us follow Christ's example. See Romans 1:9; 15:30; Philippians 1:27.

Looking Compassionately – Luke 22:45-46

Jesus saw the weakness of the disciples. Sorrow drains our energy and courage. It leads us into temptation. Jesus had let them sleep for a while (Matthew 26:45-46), but now it was time to rise to action. The action needed first was prayer to prepare the inner man. Jesus also calls us to rise to action, but that first action needed is prayer. Prayer is the first resort, not the last resort. See Ephesians 5:14-18; 3:16; Romans 13:11-14; Luke 18:1-8; Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 5:15-19; I Timothy 2:1-3; II Timothy 2:22; Jude 20-21.

Looking Resolutely – Luke 22:47-54

Temptation sometimes comes in the form of angry and unreasonable people. Confusion can come when those who should be following the Lord jump ship and join the unbelieving crowd. The disciples must have wondered, "Why is Judas with these people?" Peter tried fighting for the Lord in his own way. The Lord had to correct him and show him a different warfare – with different weapons. Submitting to the will of God and suffering for His sake is contrary to the flesh. Peter, confused and not knowing yet how to fight the Lord's way, ran with the others, but followed Jesus from a distance. He would be "converted" to greater power and used for greater purposes later. Jesus wants us to stay focused on God's heavenly and eternal purposes. See Matthew 26:51-58; II Thessalonians 3:1-5; Ephesians 6:10-19; I Peter 2:21-25; 4:7-14; 5:7-11.