

#79 THE DREAM.....

I appear to be standing on the wall of a large fortress. Directly below me are the gates to this castle-like fortress. Outside below I can hear the noise of the enemies' troops as they storm the castle. I can even hear the conversations of the high-ranking officers as they give out clear instructions to kill everyone in the fortress. To my surprise I see an enemy soldier standing about twenty feet away from me on the wall over the gate, fully armed with a long spear in his hand. He stares at me gleefully and murderously as if anticipating my death.

I am aware that he can not harm me now, but know he is waiting for the right conditions to do so. As he stands with his hateful and gleeful look, holding firmly to his weapon, I grab my stomach---I can almost feel the pain that will come if he runs me through with that spear! Suddenly a great temptation to fear and terror comes over me, and I consider surrendering to these enemies and opening the fortress gates to them. By this action I am being tempted to think that perhaps the enemy would now show mercy and not kill me. Then at that moment it was as if I had an intuition that if I did surrender, this spearman would show no mercy and would kill me at once. I somehow know, too, that he can not harm me unless I give the order for the fortress gates to be opened.

The dream then changes to another scene. I am still standing high up somewhere on a pinnacle of that fortress and am looking outside and observing. I see a horseman emerging from an opening in the fortress to face his enemies. This horseman is swinging a sword in his hand and advances quickly to meet his foes. He is very brave and appears unmoved at the enemies' ten horsemen. I watch in utter amazement at this soldier's courage and determination in meeting and fighting against such odds.

Knowing immediately that this dream was about spiritual warfare I desired to learn all its lessons and insights, for at that time I was involved in spiritual conflict. In this dream the fortress symbolizes our mind which the enemy so mightily desires to capture, the mind being the base on which one's will, affections and spirit rest. My standing on the wall over the gate of this fortress was a defensive position. Thus we must stand as spiritual Christians---born of the Spirit---for our spirits are often under attack from demonic and fleshly enemies. Though an all out attack is being made on the renewed mind where our spirit dwells, those foes can not enter unless we consent to defeat by opening the door to them.

The gleeful enemy spearman standing near me on the wall of the fortress gate was on the wall but not fully in the fortress. This speaks to us of the area of temptation where we overcome or are overcome by the enemy. Temptations come to our minds to persuade us to surrender to their suggestions. They, like the spearman, have no power as long as we do not consent to their desires. This soldier had come as fear and terror hoping through intimidation and lies to persuade me to open the gates. However, my spiritual hearing allowed me to overhear the high-ranking officers' plans. Satan, being a skillful liar, will often promise many things to gain entrance or compromise. Our enemies can come near to tempt and attack but have no spiritual power against us without our consent.

Satan always comes to rob, kill and destroy our spiritual walk and even our souls if permitted. If his lies and deceptions succeed he will take truth away which leaves us spiritually helpless before him. Like a bully he will scream, threaten and puff himself up in an attempt to cause great fear in us and thereby demand a surrender. Fear and lies must be met with God-given faith and courage, or else discouragement and defeat will follow.

Fear often comes as a feeling or emotion just as lust and greed. This feeling is not sin but a drawing and tempting to sin. This temptation must be resisted quickly before it gains entrance to our minds. Christ lives by His Spirit in our spirits and renewed minds, so we have been given power to overcome. Another great trick of Satan is frequently to entice Christians with unforgiveness by welling

up feelings of anger or resentment in them. Again, it is a feeling or emotion that can be dealt with as such and thereby no sin has been committed. Forgiveness is a choice of the will.

It is the will, which is working from the mind, that determines whether we submit to sin or resist it. We resist sin by willfully choosing to do so, putting our spiritually renewed mind to work---this mind being strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. Often the Scriptures tell us to have courage, fear not, be not afraid. This means we do have power of will in these matters as born-again Christians. We are also often told to put on the new man in Christ---it is our responsibility to yield and be co-workers with our Lord. Emotions, feelings and desires frequently come and go, these being neither good nor evil in themselves but good or evil according to their use. Emotions and feelings are not a good gauge by which to measure a Christian's character. The Christian's will and actions are surer proof of spiritual fruit at work. Feelings and moods must not dictate our spiritual life. We must allow the Holy Spirit to control our wills and choices if we are going to follow the Lord and move upward unto maturity.

Fear, lust, anger and unforgiveness are frequent assailants. We must not be tricked into thinking they are sin to us if we have not entertained them or opened our minds to them. These are mere temptations that come to all. We choose sin by our wills and we can also choose to resist sin by our wills. It matters little if our feelings and emotions are in conflict. They soon will pass if not fed by sin. We must not consent to be defeated by our enemies. They are liars and are cruel also. If from fear or whatever other temptation we consent to Satan we will not fare well in the long run. Satan has no true interest in us---he desires only to use us to express his rebellion and hate toward God.

When or if he succeeds in getting us to open to him, he soon will throw us aside when finished. He is unable to love or be faithful to anyone! Selfishness is at the core of his nature. It is rough on occasion to have Satan as an enemy and worse yet as a power over us. However, it is far worse to have rebelled against the Lord and have to face Him in displeasure as Satan stands there to accuse.

If we sin and are defeated in willfully yielding to Satan's temptations, we must put the blame where it is due. No one makes us sin, not even Satan! If we sin it is because we have consented to it by choice. We have chosen to allow ourselves to be drawn away by sin or not to put on the armor of Christ or, having done so, refuse to use it.

The second phase of this dream deals with our offensive stance. Most of the armor given in the sixth chapter of Ephesians is for defense, yet the sword is given for offense. The Word of God is that sword. The Holy Spirit is the power behind that sword. The brave horseman was swinging that sword as he advanced toward his enemies. The ten other horsemen speak to us of the full power of the enemy---ten being a complete number. Though Satan attacks at full fury he is no match for any believer who uses the sword of the Spirit in battle against him. The horseman charged with courage and determination. Numbers mean little in spiritual battles. A little faith can move a large mountain---one soldier empowered by Christ can stand if need be against any high-ranking demon or demons.

God delights in using weak human vessels empowered by Him against whom no enemy can stand. God's grace and our yielding will withstand any spiritual foe set against us. As long as we by faith and obedience draw on God's graces we shall not go down in defeat. If we do, it is our own fault--not the devil's or God's. If Christians would remind themselves often that they are in a spiritual war until they cross over into heaven they would prepare themselves to do battle. They would determine by God's grace and enabling to win these battles here in the practical walk---not in some positional walk and life in which they may have no fruit to prove it exists. Holiness and overcoming are practical outworkings of the Christian life. Lives that do not bear these fruit would do well to examine themselves to see if they are in the real faith.