

HWMR: THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE (Week 6)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:10-20

The Bride as the Corporate Warrior

- Eph 6:10 Finally, be **empowered in the Lord** and in the **might of His strength**.
Eph 6:11 **Put on the whole armor of God** that you may be able to **stand against** the stratagems of the devil,
Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but **against** the rulers, **against** the authorities, **against** the world-rulers of this darkness, **against** the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.
Eph 6:13 Therefore **take up the whole armor of God** that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having **girded your loins with truth** and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**
Eph 6:15 And having **shod your feet** with the firm foundation of the **gospel of peace**;
Eph 6:16 Besides all these, having taken up the **shield of faith**, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.
Eph 6:17 And receive the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which Spirit is the **word of God**,
Eph 6:18 By means of all **prayer and petition**, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
Eph 6:19 And for me, that **utterance** may be given to me in the **opening of my mouth**, to make known in **boldness the mystery of the gospel**,
Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would **speak boldly, as I ought to speak**

Day 1

Song of Songs 6:4 - You are as **beautiful**, my love, as Tirzah, as **lovely as Jerusalem**, as **terrible as an army with banners**.

Song of Songs 6:13 - Return, return, O Shulammitte; return, return, that we may gaze at you. Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, as upon the dance of two camps?

Ultimately, the **lover** becomes a **terrible army with banners** and the **Shulammitte**. At this point the lover of Christ has reached the stage of **living not only in Christ's ascension** but also **within the veil**. The veil is the separation in God's dwelling place, His sanctuary. God's sanctuary is one, but it is separated by a veil. At one end is the Holy Place, and at the other end is the Holy of Holies where God Himself dwells in His Divine Trinity.

We know this because within the Ark in the Holy of Holies there were three items: the hidden manna, the budding rod, and the tablets of the law. The hidden manna in the golden pot refers to God the Father as the divine source of all supply, and the budding rod signifies Christ as the resurrection. Among the three of the Divine Trinity, the second is the resurrection. Jesus said that He is the resurrection, the reality of the budding rod of Aaron. The tablets of the law refer to the Spirit of life as the inner law. Thus, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are dwelling in the Holy of Holies. **When we enter into the Holy of Holies, we enter into God and meet the Father as the source of supply, the Son as the resurrection, and the Spirit as the law of life.**

As to Christ, the veil in the temple has been split in two, but as to us, God allows the veil to remain in order that we would be **one with Him**. The Holy of Holies is God Himself to be the overcomers' dwelling place, so these two should be one. In the figure of the lover as the bed in the night at wartime, the overcomer is Christ's resting place. Christ sleeps in that bed, so they two are one. Similarly, the lover as the palanquin and the Lord as the rider become one. In both figures Christ's lover becomes the dwelling place for Christ. However, when we enter within the veil, God becomes our dwelling place and we become the dweller. These illustrations indicate that **we are in union with the Triune God**. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. Crystallization- study of Song of Songs, chapter 12)

Day 2

Romans 8:37 - But in all these things we more than **conquer through Him who loved us**.

Romans 12:5 - So we who are many are **one Body in Christ**, and individually **members one of another**.

I. **Ephesians 6:10-20** reveals that the bride is a **corporate warrior** fighting against the enemy of God for God's kingdom:

- A. When the overcoming lover of Christ becomes one with God to be God's dwelling place, **in the eyes of God** she is as **beautiful** as Tirzah and as **lovely** as Jerusalem; however, **to the enemy** she is as **terrible as an army with banners**—S. S. 6:4:
 - 1. **Banners** indicate a **readiness to fight** and also are a **sign that the victory is won**; a **terrible army** signifies that the overcomers of the Lord **terrify God's enemy**, Satan.
 - 2. This **army fights the battle** for God's kingdom in the degradation of God's people to become the overcomers who answer the Lord's call (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21); eventually, the overcomers will **become a bride collectively to marry Christ** (19:7-9); after their wedding, this bride will become an army to fight alongside Christ, her Husband, to defeat Antichrist with all his followers (vv. 11-21).
- B. The church as the bride is actually the **corporate man** in God's intention, who will fulfill the twofold purpose of **expressing God** and **dealing with God's enemy**—Gen. 1:26.
- C. Not only must God's eternal purpose be fulfilled and the desire of Christ's heart be satisfied, but **God's enemy must be defeated**; for this, the **church must be a warrior**.
- D. Our **walk** is for the **fulfillment** of God's purpose, our **living** is for the **satisfaction** of Christ, and our **warfare** is for the **defeat** of God's enemy—Eph. 4:1; 5:2, 8; 6:10-11.

II. The testimony of Jesus during the millennium is the **bride of Christ**—the **overcomers** who are the **co-kings of Christ**—Rev. 19:7-9; 20:4, 6:

- A. The **Lord's recovery** is for the **preparation of the bride of Christ** (19:7-9; 21:2); ultimately, we will be conformed to be the wonderful Shulammite, who, as the duplication of Solomon, is the greatest and ultimate figure of the New Jerusalem as the counterpart, the bride, of Christ (S. S. 6:13; Rev. 21:2, 9-10; 22:17a).
- B. The Shulammite is likened to the dance of **two camps**, or **two armies** (Heb. *mahanaim*), in the sight of God; after Jacob saw the angels of God, the two armies of God, he named the place where he was Mahanaim and divided his wives, children, and possessions into "two armies"—S. S. 6:13; Gen. 32:1-10:

1. The spiritual significance of the two armies is the strong testimony that we **more than conquer**, we “**super-overcome**,” through Him who loved us according to the principle of the Body of Christ—Rom. 8:37; 12:5; Deut. 32:30; Eccl. 4:9-12.
2. God does not want those who are strong in themselves; He wants only the **feeble ones**, the **weaker ones**, the women and children; those who are counted worthy to be overcomers will be the weaker **ones who depend on the Lord**—1 Cor. 1:26-28; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; 13:3-5; S. S. 8:6.
3. God needs a people who are **one with Him**, a people who are **submissive to Him**, signified by the plaited hair (1:11), and **obedient to Him** with a flexible will, signified by the neck with strings of jewels (v. 10).
4. When we consider how to arrive at the highest peak of the divine revelation, we **should not trust in ourselves** but **depend on the Lord** as love, power, and mercy to make us vessels of mercy, honor, and glory—Rom. 9:16, 21-23.

We need to remember that the romance in Song of Songs is in four stages. The **first** is the **attracting and pursuing stage**. The **second** is the **stage of experiencing the cross**, dealing with our “I,” with our self. The **third** stage is **to live in the heavenlies** to be God’s new creation in resurrection. The **last stage** is **to live in the sanctuary with the veil** dealt with all the time so that we may be one with the Triune God, who is our sanctuary, to have the top enjoyment in the Divine Trinity.

Even at our regeneration, the first experience of the spiritual life, we can see all these principles. Regeneration is by the death of Christ to enter into His resurrection and ascension. This new birth makes us **heavenly and divine** to be God’s new creation. This is the **initial stage**. The **highest stage** is to **live in God as the sanctuary** with the veil dealt with all the time. In this highest stage we can see the death of Christ applied to the veil of the flesh, to crucify the flesh. With the death of Christ there is also His resurrection and ascension. In this **consummate stage** we also see the heavenlies, **God’s divinity**, and the **new creation**. The same principles that were in the initial stage of our spiritual life are also in the highest stage. Since the day we were regenerated, we had the things of the highest stage to live in God. When we were regenerated, **Christ began to live in us**, and we **lived in Christ, in God**. That living must be through the cross in resurrection and in ascension and is heavenly and divine for us to be a new creation. (*CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. Crystallization- study of Song of Songs, chapter 12*)

Day 3

Ephesians 1:5 - Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Matthew 6:10 - Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

III. Spiritual warfare is necessary because **Satan’s will is in conflict with God’s will**—**Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; Matt. 6:10:**

- A. In addition to God’s intention, **God’s will**, there is a second intention, a second will, for the **satanic will** is set against the divine will—Isa. 14:12-14.
- B. All warfare has its **source** in the conflict between Satan’s will and God’s will.
- C. Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan; in order for the kingdom of the heavens to be established, there is the need of **spiritual fighting**—Matt. 12:26, 28; Rev. 12:11.

- D. We **walk** according to **truth** and by **grace**, we live in **love** and light, and we fight to subdue the satanic will—Eph. 4:1; 5:2, 8; 6:12.

Many Christians do not know the true significance of the preaching of the gospel. The Bible says that we must repent for the kingdom. The kingdom of God is actually the exercise of the divine will. When sinners repent for the kingdom of God, they turn from the side of Satan to the side of God, which is the kingdom of God, the will of God. After a person turns from the satanic will to the divine will, he must **believe** in the Lord Jesus and be **baptized**. Through baptism he is brought out of the authority of darkness, the satanic will, and is **transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God's love**.

From the day we were saved, our Christian life has been a **life of warfare**. The same was true of the children of Israel after they made their exodus from Egypt. After eating the Passover, they marched like an army out of the land of Egypt. This indicates that their eating of the Passover lamb was a preparation for war. They were saved in an atmosphere of warfare. As soon as they came out of Egypt, the fighting began. Pharaoh and his chariots pursued the children of Israel, but God came in to fight for them. After the children of Israel had passed through the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army had been overthrown, God's people triumphantly praised Him for His victory over the enemy. The Israelites proceeded to **fight their way through the wilderness**, and they **continued fighting in the good land**. Their history thus reveals that the life of a saved one is a life of warfare. (*Life Study of Ephesians, Message 63*)

Day 4

Ephesians 6:10 - Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

Ephesians 6:12 - For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

IV. To deal with God's enemy, we need to be **empowered with the greatness of the power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the heavenlies, far above all the evil spirits in the air**—v. 10; 1:19-22:

- A. The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that **in ourselves we cannot fight** the spiritual warfare against Satan and his evil kingdom; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His strength.
- B. The charge to be empowered implies the need to **exercise our will**; if we would be empowered for spiritual warfare, our will must be **strong** and **exercised**—S. S. 4:4; 7:4.

V. The warfare between the church and Satan is a battle between **us who love the Lord and who are in His church** and the **evil powers in the heavenlies**—Eph. 6:12:

- A. The **rulers**, the **authorities**, and the **world-rulers of this darkness** are the **rebellious angels**, who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and who now rule in the heavenlies over the nations of the world—Col. 1:13; Dan. 10:20.
- B. We need to realize that our warfare is not against human beings but **against the evil spirits**, the spiritual powers in the heavenlies.

Day 5

Ephesians 6:14 - Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Ephesians 6:17-18 - And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.

VI. Spiritual warfare is not an individual matter; it is a matter of **Christ's bride being a corporate warrior**—Eph. 6:13:

- A. The church is a corporate warrior, and the **believers** together make up this **corporate warrior**; after we have been formed **corporately into an army**, we will be able to fight against God's enemy.
- B. God's strategy is to use the church as His army to fight against the enemy; **Satan's strategy is to isolate us** from the church as God's army.
- C. The whole armor of God is for the Body, not for individuals; **only the corporate warrior can wear the whole armor of God**.

VII. To fight the spiritual warfare, we need to **put on the whole armor of God**—v. 11:

- A. God in Christ as the reality in our living is the **girdle** that **strengthens our whole being** for the spiritual warfare—v. 14a.
- B. The **breastplate** of righteousness that **covers our conscience and guards us** from Satan's accusations is Christ as our righteousness—v. 14b; 1 Cor. 1:30.
- C. **Christ is the peace** for us to be one with God and with the saints; this peace is the **firm foundation that enables us to stand** against the enemy—Eph. 2:15; 6:15.
- D. **Faith** is a **shield against the flaming darts of the enemy**; Christ is the Author and Perfecter of such faith—v. 16; Heb. 12:2.
- E. The **helmet of salvation** that **covers our mind** is the saving Christ whom we experience in our daily life—Eph. 6:17a; John 16:33.
- F. The **sword of the Spirit**, which Spirit is the word of God, is our **offensive weapon** with which we **cut the enemy to pieces**—Eph. 6:17b.

Day 6

Ephesians 6:11 - Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil.

Ephesians 6:13 - Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- G. **Prayer** is the unique, crucial, and vital means by which we **apply the whole armor of God**, making every item of the armor available to us in a practical way—v. 18.

VIII. By **putting on the whole armor of God**, we are **able to stand against the stratagems, the evil plans, of the devil**—vv. 11, 13-14:

- A. To **sit with Christ** is to participate in all His accomplishments, to **walk in His Body** is to fulfill God's eternal purpose, and to **stand in His power** is to fight against God's enemy—2:6; 4:1; 5:2, 8; 6:11, 13-14.

B. In fighting against the enemy, the most important thing is to **stand**; having done all, we need to **stand to the end**.

IX. We all need to see that in the Lord's recovery today we are on a battlefield; we must cooperate with the Lord to fight against Satan's aerial forces so that we can gain more of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ and the preparation of the bride of Christ, setting up and spreading the kingdom of God so that Christ can come back to inherit the earth.

The last item of the armor is the **most important**. This is **prayer**. This is not merely to pray for our small personal matters. Many good saints pray day by day only for their small matters, such as their house and pets. A certain elderly sister in my hometown prayed much for the chickens that she raised. She prayed that the Lord would protect the chickens and the things that she needed to raise them. We should forget all such matters related to our family and our living. The Lord told us that our Father knows everything that we need. Rather, we should **pray for the kingdom, the gospel, the church, and the Lord's interest**.

Ephesians 6:18 says, "*By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.*" **Prayer** is a **general term**, and **petition** is **prayer in a specific way with a certain purpose**. Verses 19 and 20 continue, "*And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*" Me in verse 19 refers to the apostle, the sent one. Utterance here is the Greek word logos, meaning "word." Our **utterance is the proper, expressive word**. These verses indicate that the things we must pray for are the **kingdom of God, the saints of God, the gospel of the Lord, and the Lord's interest**. If, for example, we see certain things in the church, we should not talk to one another as if reporting news, providing material to gossip about. To gossip about church affairs opens the door for the enemy to come in and attack the church. The more we know something about the church, the more we need to bring it to the Lord, to touch the throne by our **prevailing prayer**. This is the right way to pray. If we are properly realizing the church life, we will stop all gossiping and be prevailing, living, active, and positive in prayer. We will go to the Lord to pray, to touch the throne, and to bring all problems to the throne.

We must not point to someone and say, "What kind of a leading one or elder is that?" When we criticize in this way, we **damage** the church life and **open the way for the enemy** to come in and attack the church and bring death into the Body. We are **defeated** by the enemy already. We **lose our ground**, and we **damage the church** very much. The only thing **we must do is to bring this matter to the Head and pray**, "Lord, be merciful to us and be merciful to that brother. Lord, we leave it to You what You must do." The Lord will honor our prayer. By praying in this way, we will be those standing in the opening to shut the way for the enemy to come in to attack and damage the Body. **We must simply go to the Lord and pray**. If someone else has the same realization that we have, we should be one to go to the Lord to pray. Our weapon is our prayer for the matters we see and for the Lord's servants.

The church life is a **prayer life**. I especially ask the leading ones among the saints to realize a real prayer life. The leading brothers must come together to pray often and pray more. Then they will help all the saints to learn to have a prayer life. To simply have a prayer meeting in the church once a week is not sufficient. The church must have a **prayer life**, and the leading ones must take the lead in this prayer life. All these items are the armor that we need to fight the battle. In these days the battle is not a small matter. It is not a small matter to speak about the eternal purpose and central thought of God, the church life, the testimony, and the recovery of the testimony. We cannot succeed merely by speaking or preaching. We must realize these matters by **fighting and by praying**. (*Basic Principles for the Practice of the Church Life*, Chapter 6)