

House Group Notes

12th September 2017



Ichthus Values, Characteristics & Distinctives Session 20:

Distinctives: What Makes Ichthus Unique

Part 5 of 7: Battle Theology

Introduction

Last time we looked at the fact we are “Charismatic”, meaning that we believe that the Holy Spirit has been given to us, the church, to help us. We believe that God’s Spirit moves with power and releases gifts in us, His body here on earth.

Recap: Try and remember all 9 gifts of the Spirit together

Tonight we continue our series looking at Ichthus’ distinctives and what makes us unique as a church. Tonight’s session is entitled “Battle Theology”: this simply means that as we seek to understand God and His relationship with us, the world and the heavens, we are aware there is a spiritual battle going on. Again, although this is one of Ichthus’ distinctives it is not to say that other churches don’t believe this too!

Introductory questions:

- When you look at the world around you, do you think we are in a battle?
- Why? What makes you think that?
- Do you think you/we, as Christians, have a role to play in this battle?
- What do you think that role might be?

Read: 1 Peter 5:8, 1 John 5:19, Luke 4:5-8, Matthew 8:28, Matthew 17:18, Ephesians 6:10-12,

Discussion Questions:

- What can we learn about the devil’s character?
 - Violent, deceptive, nasty, etc.
- What can we learn about his authority, forces and power?
 - The world is his to give, he can cause sickness, uses other agents too like demons, etc.
- What can we learn about the devil’s tactics?
 - Lies, deceives, seeks people to devour, causes sickness, etc.

Read: Matthew 6:10, Daniel 10:10-14, (explain that the “princes” are spiritual powers like those mentioned in Ephesians 6:12 above)

- What can we learn about praying?
 - That perhaps God’s will isn’t always being done on earth as it is in heaven
 - There is a spiritual battle going on, so our prayers make a difference!
 - That the spiritual battle may mean it takes time for our prayers to be answered

Read Ephesians 6:10-20 (Don't go into the details of the armour as there won't be time and we did it in Overflow a year or so ago)

Discussion Questions:

- Who or what do we fight against?
- What do we learn about our role and how we fight from the Ephesians 6 passage and the passages we read earlier?
 - A few things to get your discussion started:
 - We fight as a team with others
 - Don't look for a fight - stand firm, don't charge headlong into the battle
 - Prayer is a huge part of it
 - Persevere
 - Be prepared – Put on the armour!!
 - Be on the alert
- If we are in a battle, what does this mean for us (the people who are fighting and the members of the church)?
 - E.g. we might sometimes get hurt

Unfortunately many Christians believe that the devil doesn't exist today, and/or that God is perfectly in control of literally everything and that everything happens according to His will. In a sense the second point is true because God has made the universe, but do you remember when we looked at relational theology? We concluded that we have a relational God who has given freewill to His created beings. This includes the devil and demons and they have used this freewill to rebel and battle against God and His creation.

American theologian and friend of Ichthus Dr Greg Boyd once said (This is not a direct quote, but paraphrased):

“One of the problems with the church today is that we don't realise we are in a battle. It's like many Christians are trying to have a nice picnic on the beach on D-Day, and those Christians are looking around wondering why they, and other believers, are being blown apart!”

We've seen we have an enemy in the devil and that he isn't nice. He is literally the person of evil and he doesn't like it when the church is living how Jesus showed us to do so. When we love one another; love those who hurt us; when we do evangelism to tell others that Jesus died for them; when we pray and see God move; or even when we worship. The devil doesn't like these things and he is out to get us. We shouldn't be afraid though, after all we have a God who loves us and who is so much greater than the devil – we know that ultimately, Jesus wins the war!! We just need to be aware of this battle so we can stay safe, be prepared, and should things go wrong for us we should recognise that the devil may have a role in that.

So, let's remember to pray protection for one another, stand firmly together in the victory that Jesus accomplished on the cross, and know that we are in a battle and that we need to be on the alert together.

Pray to finish

- Pray for God's protection and put on the armour of God together
- Pray that Ichthus Lee Green will be on the alert together and resist the devil together