

As I write this, I am preparing for a skit that Kelsey and I will be doing for the opening program on the opening day of VBS. She starts by introducing the title and theme of VBS, Keepers of the Kingdom. She tells the kids that they are about to, “...enter a world of castles and kings and queens and dragons and epic battles.” I then enter the stage with my 5lb weights as I want to be strong and fit for battle. But Kelsey goes on to say that we are talking about being strong in the Lord and that it has nothing to do with lifting weights. I finally come to the realization that, “*This sounds like big stuff.*” Which it is.

As the Church, if we are going to be defenders of the Truth, we must be strong in the Lord. We must be versed in the Word. We must be bathed in scripture. I have been reading a book by the 19th century English preacher, Charles Spurgeon, titled, The Power of Scripture. In chapter four he talks about Christ’s indwelling Word. He says the Word must “*enter you*”, meaning, you must get into the Word. Read your Bible, not as a duty to get through a reading plan, but to study the Word, so that the Word “*remains in you*”. And as the Word remains in you, let it “*occupy your whole being*”, taking up residence in your life. And, as you dwell with the Word, let it become “*your most familiar friend*”. Spurgeon goes on to say, “*I can truly say that there is hardly anybody in the world that I know so well as I know David.*” That is dwelling in the Word and the Word dwelling in you.

But maybe you will never get to the point of where Spurgeon reached but that does not mean you do not try. I will never be a world-class weightlifter, but I will continue doing strength training in order for my body to be stronger and more fit, and better able to combat the effects of arthritis in my back. In the same way, you must dwell in the Word, getting to know it better and better, that you may be ready to do battle, standing for the Word of God. This world is constantly attacking and twisting the Truth, but we must stand firm. Therefore...

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 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 firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the

breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (Ephesians 6:10-17)

Get ready to do battle, knowing that you do not battle alone.