



(Latin: Praemonitus)

"To be forewarned is to be forearmed".

Dear RCF Friends,

Over the past few months there has been an indisputable move of God among us as well as in the rest of the body of Christ throughout the Twin Cities, the state, and our nation. I believe the church is being set on fire and released into a new freedom as we realize the truth of Luke 12:32 - "**your Father has been PLEASED TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM.**" God's rule, dominion, reign and power is becoming more and more evident. We are all being changed for a purpose and destiny that only God fully understands.

As your pastor I'm blessed to see the growth and maturity coming to this fellowship. Many of you have a strong desire in your heart to taken the kingdom into the marketplace. For us, it is not a mere outreach program but as a way of life. **The testimonies we share regularly prove God is equipping and empowering us.** The Light of Life is shining in the darkness where we live, work, and play. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here it is', or 'There it is', because THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU." (Luke 17:20) Being emboldened by that fact we intentionally express the kingdom life to those we come in contact with each day. Each time we pray for someone, encourage them, bless them in Jesus name, witness to them we declare the kingdom of God. What a privilege given us by God!

Recently I mentioned that while we are enjoying the favor and blessing of God, we also want to be on our guard spiritually. **We must remain steadfast and vigilant in our commitment to be market-place Christians** but we also need to be diligent recognizing the fact that as God's kingdom advances it will undoubtedly be met with resistance of various kinds.

I'm not at alarmist, nor am I given to seeing demon's behind every bush. However, I do believe spiritual opposition comes to all who step out in faith, bearing witness to the love and goodness of God, and who pray for the sick while encouraging men and women with the truth of God's word.

Only a foolish man would believe he could speak the words and demonstrate the works of Jesus without an ensuing battle. We must acknowledge Satan's hatred for everything Jesus did and came to do. We must also understand that he finds the words and works we do in Jesus' name equally abhorrent. But let's never forget, it was Jesus the Victor, the Captain of the Army, the Lord of hosts who said: "I will build my church, and gates of Hades will not overcome it." (NIV) This same verse is rendered this way in *The Message Bible* - "I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out." (Mt.16:18)

Any wise and militarily successful soldier will undoubtedly know who he is personally (his strengths and weaknesses). He will also know his enemy...how he thinks, his strategies, his weaknesses, and how he conducts his warfare. By knowing himself and his enemy a soldier battles not out of fear and weakness but out of a place of strength and confidence.

As Christians we know our enemy through the Word and through experiences and so we too should **battle from a place of strength and confidence in Christ** and not out of weakness and fear. Peter wrote this word of exhortation:

"Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up. You're not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It's the same with Christians all over the world. So keep a firm grip on the faith. The suffering won't last forever. It won't be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ --eternal and glorious plans they are! -- will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does." (1 Peter 5:18 ff - *The Message*)

I trust you are edified and fortified by the words which declare that **"greater is He who is IN YOU than he who is in the world"**. So be strong and vigilant.

With that in mind, I would like to encourage you today to guard your heart and stay alert, recognizing how the enemy of our souls often manifests and mounts his attack. Watch carefully for the following attacks. Remember, **we may not choose the time, method, or the battle ground, but we do choose if we are going to wage war in a successful and godly way**, knowing full well that our victory is already complete and finalized in the cross.

"TO BE FOREWARNED IS TO BE FOREARMED".

It means that knowledge of imminent danger can prepare us to overcome it. If we anticipate the attack we will not be caught sleeping, daydreaming, and unprepared. We all recognize a major attack when it comes, but **we must learn to discern the lesser ones that seem to unsettle us and undermine all that God wants us to do**. Allow me to suggest a few things to watch for in these days as we recognize the scheme of the enemy. But first, this verse:

EPHESIANS 6:10,11

"Finally, **BE STRONG IN THE LORD** and **IN HIS MIGHTY POWER**. Put on the full armor of God so that **YOU CAN TAKE YOUR STAND AGAINST THE DEVIL'S SCHEMES**."

1- Watch out for **DISCOURAGEMENT** (could be about your finances, spiritual life, relationships, ministry, etc...recognize that discouragement and depression is often related to a spirit that has been sent to you to cause a sense of hopelessness. Stand against it in prayer and in His mighty power)

2) Guard your **RELATIONSHIPS** (if you find yourself in conflicts with people you wouldn't normally have difficulty with be alert, this may very well be an attack...but you can resist it if you will place on the armor and be strong in His mighty power)

3) Protect your **VISION AND PASSION** (Satan would want to undermine the vision and passion God has birthed in your life, **attempting to cause you to withdraw or lay down the purposes of God in your heart** - this is resisted by standing strong in the Lord and in His mighty power)

4) **PHYSICAL ATTACKS** - (afflicting spirits can be sent to bring you down, discourage and weaken your faith and involvement. I remember once setting up an appointment with a demonized woman who was hearing voices coming out of her stereo speakers telling her to kill herself. She was tormented day and night. On the day I was to go and pray over her for deliverance I got out of bed and become incredibly dizzy. Never before or since has that happened. When I would lie down the dizziness would cease; I'd get up and the dizziness came back; when I said I wasn't going to pray for her the dizziness stopped immediately; when I said, "I feel better and I'm going" it would come back stronger. That physical condition was symptomatic of an afflicting spirit. The next time I scheduled the meeting I prayed before going to bed and got up and was able to go. Why? Because **I recognized the enemy's tactics..."forewarned I was forearmed"..."in the power of His might.** I case you are wondering, the lady was delivered and accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. Glory to God!!! Remember: every attack can be resisted if we face it in the strength of the Lord and His mighty power)

5) Identify **FEAR** when it crouches at the door of your life. This is a common yet powerful tactic of the enemy. There can be real or false fear. Real fear is legitimate fear (a hungry boa in your bed might qualify). False fear is when there is no real danger but through intimidation the enemy creates a sense of fear. **We cannot live in fear and confidence in God's provision at the same time.** One will dominate. Choose to intentionally trust God, to fix your eyes on Him, to **be strong in God and in His mighty power.**

6) Resist being **INTOLERANT** of things that are of no significance. If you find yourself begin irritated and intolerant of people and things that previously you have been tolerant of...ask yourself... "could this be an attack?" ...an attempt to undermine what God wants to do in and through me. The best way to fight against this is to simply **"be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power".**

I could go on and on but suffice it to say, **we must be alert.** So, right now, this moment, if you have not placed upon yourself the full armor of God, then stop reading and get dressed for battle....

put on the belt of truth, the **breastplate** of righteousness, put on the **boots** of the gospel of peace so you have a firm footing, also, take up the **shield** of faith "with which **YOU CAN EXTINGUISH ALL THE FLAMING ARROWS** of the evil one; take the **helmet** of salvation and the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:10-17)

Wow! Don't you feel better already? Don't you feel more prepared for battle? Let's go forward in the strength of the Lord and in His mighty power. Be in the word and learn to love the Word, pray for and expect victories in your life and those around you; asked for divine appointments and supernatural anointing; rejoice in the Lord, be glad and walk in the Spirit. And as you live this life for the glory of God, **always be vigilant!**