

Get Real (and Renounce Your Faith in the Devil—Jesus Wins)

Ephesians 6:1-20

#34 in our series from Paul's letter to the Ephesians and our third sermon on spiritual warfare.

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Prayer

Lord God we pray that you would open our hearts and that you would help us to believe your Word to us, delivered through the power of your Holy Spirit and that we'd walk in what's real and abandon what's false, that we'd come home to You...Father. In Jesus' name through the power of your Spirit.

Message

Ephesians 6:10

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil (the accuser). For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood..."

According to Paul, we're in some sort of struggle or battle and I don't know about you, but I actually find that to be strangely encouraging.

M. Scott Peck writes, "Life is difficult and once we truly know life is difficult—once we truly understand and accept it, then life is no longer difficult." So I find this message encouraging. It's like we're on a cruise ship and everyone is talking about how fun it is to be here as the loud speaker plays Louis Armstrong singing, "I see trees of green, red roses too. I see them bloom for me and for you, and I think to myself...what a wonderful world."

People are smiling but you notice that the ship is on fire and big gaping wounds suddenly appear in the people around you, and then the person you're dancing with drops to the floor in a pool of blood. Well, it's a relief when someone cries out: "Hey! This isn't a cruise ship; this is a battle ship, and we're at war!"

Henry David Thorough wrote, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." In other words, they act like life is easy and: "I'm enjoying the cruise," while all around them...all Hell is breaking loose, and within them, their hearts are paralyzed in fear. It's just nice when quiet desperation becomes public desperation and someone says, "Hey, we're at war; it isn't easy but hard—this isn't right...but wrong." Yet, Jesus seems to be saying the brutally hard can be easy: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me—my yoke is easy"...and yet...His yoke is a cross.

Paul writes, "We battle..."

But to be more precise he writes, "We wrestle."

Jesus battled and we wrestle.

In chapter 1 verse 10, Paul told us God's plan for "the fullness of time is to *anakephalaio*—unite all things in Christ," and in verse 11 that "God accomplishes all things according to the council of His will."

In 2:14 He told us that Christ: "has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" and in 4:6 that God is: "Father of all, over all—through all and in all." It's Paul that wrote, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never fails."

Love, Love, Love.

Sometimes, when I talk like Paul, some folks may think I'm denying that there is a battle and that we have an enemy. Well, Paul is not denying the battle. (He's chained to a wall in a Roman prison.) He doesn't deny the battle, and he certainly doesn't deny that we have an enemy. He's just saying that the enemy is not people: It's not Pharaoh, or Pontius Pilot, or Saul of Tarsus...who persecuted the church. It's not the Romans or the Jews. It's not Hitler or the President of Iran. It's the devil and the principalities and powers—the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. So, in a way, it's kind of a relief to hear that we really do have an enemy, and yes...we're under attack.

But how horrifying is it to discover that we are not battling democrats or republicans. Our enemy is Satan and the dominion of Hell. And who is sufficient for a fight like that? "*We wrestle not against flesh and blood.*" I think we all know something is wrong and so we all want to wrestle but who is sufficient for the fight?

Clip from *Nacho Libre*

[Nacho Libre prays: "Precious Father. Why have you given me this desire to wrestle but made me such a stinky warrior? Have I focused too much on my boots and my fame and my stretchy pants?"]

That's a great movie: *Nacho Libre*. It's actually based on the true story of Sergio Benitez, a Mexican priest who ran an orphanage out of his income from professional wrestling. Nacho prays: "Why have you given me this desire to wrestle but made me such a stinky warrior?" Great question!

Ephesians 6:10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 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. 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. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words (literally "word" in the singular) may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery (the mysterion, the secret) of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

"*The mystery of the gospel.*" We are to proclaim it with our whole lives, and Paul was to proclaim it boldly with his mouth. And what is "the mystery of the gospel?" Well, Paul has already told us: Ephesians 1:9-10 "*The mystery of his will: the plan for the fullness of time: to unite—anakephalaio all things in Christ Jesus.*" Ephesians 3:3 "*The mystery was made known to me by revelation.*"

Ephesians 3:6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are "*fellow heirs, members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*" The Gentiles are those that don't believe. The mystery of the gospel is that those who don't believe...will believe, that those who weren't

chosen are chosen because they are chosen in Christ Jesus. So it's not simply that we don't wrestle *against* people, we wrestle *for* people, against the accuser and his dominion of darkness. We "wrestle"—*pale* is the Greek noun, and in all of scripture it only appears here. *Palaio* is the Greek verb. It shows up in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Genesis 32 when Jacob wrestles the God-Man at the edge of the Promised Land.

Well, scholars ask: Why did Paul use that word "wrestle" when he could have used a word like fight or war. Some think it's because wrestling is intimate, passionate, and visceral—you feel it.

Paul is in prison and soon will be executed. If you choose to wrestle, don't be surprised if something wrestles back. And don't be surprised if the rulers and authorities beat you and throw you in jail. Wrestling is intimate, passionate, and visceral. It's like a battle, and yet...wrestling is a sport.

Markus Barth writes, "The effect of Paul's (word) choice is an antidote against a tragic-dualistic world view." He's pointing out that the battle between God and Satan is not like a battle between equal opposite forces, and it's not like the battle is in question. In fact, God has already won in Christ Jesus. In Colossians 2:15 Paul teaches that at the cross, God: "*disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, triumphing over them in Jesus.*" Maybe that's why Jesus cried, "*It is finished,*" as He did on the cross.

"*It is finished.*" Jesus bore the sins of the world...so all the accuser's accusations are nothing but lies. The accuser has been disarmed; "*It is finished.*" So Jesus battled and we wrestle—*pale*. *Pale* is the root of the Greek word *Palaestra*.

[Image of the Palaestra in Pompei]

This is the Palaestra in Pompei, which was buried in ash shortly after Paul wrote to the Ephesians. A Palaestra was a gymnasium. More specifically, it was a training facility for wrestlers. Maybe we wrestle because we're being trained. We're being disciplined and disciplined. We're being shaped into the image of Jesus—The Warrior—The Great Warrior.¹

Now, when you read the New Testament, I don't know if you've ever noticed this but God...Jesus...They just don't seem to be worried about the war. I don't think Jesus is stressed out about the devil or about your sin. He's already defeated the devil, already forgiven all your sin, and now He's showing you the victory that He's already won, as He shapes you in His own image.

You know, after the first message on spiritual warfare, a friend wrote, "Isn't this just fear mongering?" And I suppose it would be, except that I know every one of us is already afraid: We're all afraid of death, hell, the devil, and the powers of darkness. We all deny our fears but God walks us into our fears.

It's in the place of fear that Christ conquers.

It's on the hill of the skull that God reveals His glory.

It's in the valley of the shadow that God grows faith, the faithfulness of Christ in us.

So maybe that's why we wrestle against a "spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places;" for God is making us in the image of Jesus—The God-Man—The Wrestler.

I wrestled in seventh grade, and I hated it. I got pinned in every single match, and then at the last meet, while I was watching the eighth-graders (the champions) wrestle, while standing on the side of the mat, John Wallace (who sometimes watches sermons online) came up behind me and de-pantsed me, and it was recorded on videotape. In seventh grade, wrestling made me feel naked and weak, and more absurd than Nacho Libre in his stretchy pants. Every time I wrestled, I knew I'd lose, and maybe that's why I lost. I hated wrestling. And yet, up until seventh grade, I'd always loved wrestling.

My favorite thing was wrestling my Dad. I'd feel my own weakness, but also his strength. So I knew my own weakness and enjoyed his strength. I knew that I would inherit his strength. So even if I lost...I won, and if I won it was because he chose to lose for me. I loved to wrestle my Dad, and it shaped me in his image.

In Genesis 32, Jacob is attacked by the God-Man at the river Jabok. They wrestle all night and Jacob prevails, but it's obvious the God-Man lets him win; for as the sun rises, the God-Man just touches Jacob's hip, and it rips the bone from the socket. Then the God-Man blesses Jacob and names him Israel, which means "wrestles with God."

Jacob wrestled and lost...his pride...and won...God's blessing.

He was made in the image of Jesus--The God-Man, and then He blessed his brother Esau.

Well, Saint. Paul is a picture of the new Israel. And I think He's saying, "Not only do we wrestle God" (for that was the experience of Israel in the Old Testament,) "Not only does the Lord wrestle with us, now the Lord wrestles in us against the devil." We are His Body. He destroys the works of the devil through us and in this way shapes us in His image...a non-stinky, great warrior!

A few months ago, a friend was praying for me and my struggles with peaching, and she heard the Lord say, "The time Peter spends with me each week brings me great joy. I love it when Peter wrestles with me, but too often he struggles with me instead. Both the wrestling and the struggling will make him tired, but the struggling makes him discouraged. The evil one wants him to be discouraged. I want Peter to wrestle with me and be filled with the same great joy that I feel."

I think I get discouraged and I struggle when I begin to doubt that Jesus loves me...and so will win in *me* and through *me*. Every week that I preach, I get to a place where I feel naked and experience my own weakness, and yet, it's there that I also come to feel His strength and find myself covered in Jesus--the armor of God.

Ephesians 3:10 Paul told us that it's through us that God makes His victory in Christ Jesus known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. It's with you, through your life, that He delivers a message to the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Well, Nacho falls on his knees in *Nacho Libre* and prays, "Precious father, why did you give me this desire to wrestle and then make me such a stinky warrior? Have I focused too much on my boots, my fame, and my stretchy pants?" The answer: Yes. The Father wants you to know your own weakness and feel His strength, and then put him on--put Jesus on.

Ephesians 2:10 "*Walk in the good works (great wrestling moves) which God prepared before hand that we would wrestle in them.*" So Nacho, in the movie, stops wrestling for his pride and he starts wrestling for love; he wrestles in love.

Clip from Nacho Libre

[We see Nacho Libre in a match. He is beginning to be defeated but once he looks into the eyes of the ones he loves, he is motivated by his love for them. Suddenly, he is filled with new strength and is able perform his moves with amazing skill, and he overwhelmingly conquers the enemy.]

So it's when Nacho stops wrestling for his pride and wrestles in love, that he defeats the enemy, gets the girl, and saves the orphans. And that's the plot to every good story: Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love *wins!* Of course it does! "God is Love."

We may confess that with our lips, but God is wrestling it into our hearts—His church. And through us wrestling it into all people—the Gentiles.

So we wrestle not *against* people but *for* people. We wrestle against Satan and the dominion of Hell, and the match is already scripted. Satan has lost. He has been disarmed. He has been thrown down to the earth in great fury; for he knows his time is short. So what can he do? What does he do?

Clip from Jesse “the Body” Ventura

“I’m the hottest thing in professional wrestling. I am the baddest dude that walks the streets today....Chump Hogan, and you think about that...Chump...because you could not beat me; you could not even beat Sylvester Stallone in the movie *Rocky Three*; it was a draw. I’d of squashed that peanut in thirty seconds. I’m gonna pick up that big Andre. I’m gonna press that dude once, press that dude twice and then toss him right out of the rink, and Adrian and I are gonna walk out of there with 50K, just the two of us...ain’t that right Andrian? Have you checked that lateral deltoid lately? Mmmhmmm, check that out!”

Man...when I was a kid, those guys would intimidate me.

That’s Jesse “the Body” Ventura, who went on to become the “Ruler of Minnesota.” What does he do? What can Satan do? He can lie and intimidate. He tries to convince you that you can’t win because Jesus hasn’t won.

If we think we can’t win, we won’t fight, even though Jesus said, “*Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.*” Jesus gives us authority, but we won’t use it if we don’t believe it. But if you know Jesus wins, and you know He gives you authority because you’ve surrendered to His authority, then you can say, “In the name of Jesus be gone;” you can take authority and command demons to go. And if you’re ever in a situation where you do say it, and a demon doesn’t do it, don’t panic...call on Jesus to show you where the devil has a place.

You don’t have to fix the place; God just asks you to surrender the place. And if it feels hard to surrender the place, don’t panic, and don’t quit. God is teaching you to wrestle. He’s teaching you to trust His love and receive His Grace. He’s training you, disciplining you, and it takes a lifetime.

The devil wants you to panic, to give in to fear and give up on God, who *is* Love.

When we give up on Love, we listen to the principalities and powers of *this* world....

Who teach us to rely on the power of our own flesh.

Who teach us pride and then imprison us in shame.

Who motivate us with fear and know only fear.

Who teach us to create...a place for the devil...lending him our hands, our feet, for his work.

Ephesian 4:27 “Give no place to the devil.”

Years ago, Susan and I were praying for a friend, for whom we had prayed for years, with whom we had wrestled with Jesus through layer after layer of lies, ritual abuse, and demonic oppression. And now, Satan himself would manifest to her, and I would watch as he would manifest in her body.

I know it’s weird and not many experience such things, but at one point, Susan and our friend saw Satan. He was utterly terrifying; he hurled threats and accusations, but as we prayed, he shrank down to this little man on our friend’s coffee table...squeaking accusations like a character in a cartoon. And then in this vision, my wife and this friend saw Jesus enter the room, pick up the squeaky little Satan

on the coffee table, put him in his pocket, smile, turn around and leave. Then Susan heard Jesus say, "With fear you put flesh on the evil one."

What is fear?

Three hundred sixty-six times in scripture, God commands: "Fear not." I'm told that it's the most repeated commandment in all of scripture, and it must be the most violated commandment in all of scripture.

What's fear?

Well, isn't fear (of anything other than God) "faith" in the devil? Isn't your fear faith in the devil? Jesus taught that there is only one that we are to fear and that's His Father? And two verses later He says, "Fear not."

You see, the old man knows nothing but fear. So God says, "*Fear only me,*" and then God, who is Love, says, "*Fear not.*" "*Perfect love casts out fear,*" wrote John. Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead is the Revelation of Perfect Love. God in Christ casts our fear and destroys Satan's place.

Fear of anything other than God is faith in the devil and makes a place for the devil. So don't hide your fears; don't deny your fears; face your fears—shine light on your fears. Every fear reveals a place where you don't believe that God is good, and He is love, and He is all-powerful, and Love has conquered, and so you are forgiven. So your failure reveals God's glory, and your pain is not retribution from a vengeful God. Your pain is discipline from a loving Father, bound and determined to give you His entire Kingdom. Fear is faith in the devil—it's glory given to the devil—a place for the devil.

"Do not fear."

At one point, the realm of the demonic was my greatest fear. And then, as an answer to my own prayer, that God would become more real to me, God led me into my greatest fear and that place of my greatest fear revealed God's greatest glory and also the schemes of the devil.

When I first encountered the demonic, I was shocked at what the demons would say because they were things I heard all the time, not as strange creepy voices but as thoughts in my own head. The demons didn't say, "Listen to Lead Zeppelin backwards." "Read Harry Potter and vote for the Antichrist." They said things like: "You're a piece of crap," "You suck," and "God doesn't love you; God hates you," and "You don't deserve to be forgiven," "You can't be forgiven." "Jesus and His cross is weak, insufficient, not enough for the likes of you." "Go to Hell."

The more I heard those things, the more I checked my Bible, the more I realized that those statements are lies, and the more shocked I became when I heard them coming out of the mouth of the Lord's Bride. It was from the church that I heard Christ crucified and risen from the dead is not enough to save all..."He can't save all—either God doesn't want to save all or God isn't able to save all...but no matter what God will torture a bunch of people in the most horrific way you can imagine, forever and ever...without end. That's what I heard from the church...it's called the doctrine of eternal conscious torment. It's the doctrine of the greatest imaginable fear.

I discovered that the church hadn't always taught the idea but became entrenched in the idea around 500 AD when the church was conscripted by Roman Empire and became a "principality and power of this world."

You know the promise of worldly rewards and the threat of irreversible and endless torture grants the institutionalized church a whole bunch of worldly power. *But* it does incredible violence to the glory of God and the veracity of His Word.

Talk about “giving place to the devil”....The doctrine gives an eternal place to the devil:

Hades is not thrown into the lake of fire such that death is no more.

Hades is preserved & death is eternally maintained by God and His Word—endless death in Hell.

It means Jesus did not “destroy the works of the devil,”

and God maintains “the works of the devil,”

and the accusations of the devil are eternally valid.

It means Jesus did not “take away the sins of the world.”

It means that God will fail...

in making mankind in His own image,

and filling all things with Himself

and calling everything good on the seventh day

and entering into His rest.

It means God will *not* “unite all things in Christ Jesus,” as Paul says in Ephesians 1:10.

And God does not “accomplish all things according to the counsel of his will.” Ephesians 1:11

And God has not “broken down the dividing wall of hostility.” Ephesians 2:14

And Gentiles are not “heirs of the promise belonging to the same body.” Ephesians 3:6

And God is *not* the “Father of all.” Ephesians 4:6

Or if He is Father of all, He endlessly torments His own children.

And that’s not discipline...it’s torture, endless torture. They may look the same from the outside for a moment but they are absolutely opposites, one is a function of Love and one is a function of accusation and hate. And so according the doctrine, God’s wrath can never come to an end. God must be eternally unsatisfied with Christ, who is the End—unending eternal conscious torment. Doesn’t it mean Love fails? Jesus fails and Satan wins? Who would suggest such an idea?

Maybe I’m missing something, but it seems to me that what most folks mean by Hell...is not only deeply unbiblical, it gives an eternal place to the devil, claims that the death and resurrection of Jesus is insufficient and that God is not Love. Or God is less powerful than your standard sinner, and God my Father is into endless torture. And so, if that’s true...I have absolutely everything to fear. Fear, fear, fear. And you know, I didn’t learn this doctrine from scripture...but church...the Lord’s Bride.

This past Tuesday, Andrew and I met for a monthly prayer meeting with some of the folks from our church, gifted in prophetic prayer. We gathered around the cross and twelve stones that Susan and I placed at its base a few years ago, as an ebenezer, marking the fact that God brought us this far. We spoke of these sermons and our calling as a church, and then we took this sword, [Peter takes a sword from behind the cross] which hangs on the back of the cross, and symbolically, one by one, we confessed and cut off the fears that we believe hold us back.

At the end of the meeting, a friend grabbed Susan and then grabbed me. She said, “As we were doing that I had a vision. I saw a beautiful and seductive woman. I thought she was making seductive gestures with her tongue, and then I realized her tongue was a white snake. We grabbed the snake, cut off its head and pulled it out of the woman’s body, turning her inside out.”

Susan, my wife, said, “The woman speaks a lie,” and I said, “I think the woman is the Lord’s Bride, and she has been speaking the devil’s lies.” It’s so confusing to see such a vile thing come out of such a beautiful face. The Lord clearly loves His Bride, and we are His Bride, but we must stop speaking Satan’s lies. I think this is our calling...to kill the lie and pull it out of the woman.

The Sanctuary is not a cruise ship (and you know that or you wouldn't come back.) This is not a cruise ship; it is a battle ship. It's a little old wooden battle ship, designed to go where others will not go and I think commissioned to pull the snake from the Bride.

Many years ago now, I had an experience that changed my life. I've told you. It must've been about three in the morning; Susan and I were praying for our friend who had struggled so with Satanic ritual abuse. I know this sounds insane, but I was standing over her with a cup of communion wine (the eternal covenant breaks every other covenant) as Satan manifested in her body. I had bound him in Jesus' name so he could not lie. We had found the thing that had given him a place and offered it to Jesus. I was so angry *at evil*; I had commanded him to leave in Jesus' name, and I knew he was about to go. I screamed: "Jesus wins!! Doesn't He?" And in the most agonized of all voices, as he left, I heard him say, "Jesus *always* wins."

The serpent is a liar...but I think that was The Truth forced like a sword through his bloodless lips. The woman (Christ's church) spoke Satan's lie, and Jesus forced Satan to speak the truth. Jesus is the Truth, and He has conquered. Jesus *always* wins, even when He "loses," especially when He "loses," He wins!

Even when we nail Him to a tree.

Jesus wins us...

and we win all things with Him.

I stood there in shock because not only does Jesus always win, He even wins in and through *me*—Nacho Libre. The seminarian terrified of demons. The seventh-grade boy standing on the edge of the eighth-grade wrestling mat, with his shorts around his ankles. He wins.

See, it wasn't me, it was Jesus in me or me in Him. I was "*strong in the Lord and the strength of His might.*" And I not only knew about Him, I *knew* Him. I felt Him crush the head of the ancient serpent and use my heal to do it. And for a moment, I think I realized...I had nothing to fear, and I am free to love in the image of God.

I think that's why Jesus calls us...to come wrestle: "Let's wrestle, come wrestle. I'm going to wrestle my Kingdom right into your heart."

Jesus wins, and until you trust that Word you give place to the devil and trap yourself in Hell. But you will trust that word. For Jesus always wins.

Communion

On that night, the darkest of nights, the night when this entire world plotted against its Creator and prepared to nail Him to the tree. On that night, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you; take and eat; do this in remembrance of me, and in the same manner after supper, and having given thanks, He took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins; take and drink of it, all of you and do it in remembrance of me. Jesus wins! You see...until you trust that Word you create a place for the evil one, and you trap yourself in Hell. But you *will* trust that Word because Jesus always wins.

Prayer

Lord Jesus we thank you that you always win. If there is one winner, we want it to be you, and so Lord God we say to you, "You have won us; we are yours, and so together we confess our faith in the devil. I don't know if you can even call that faith, but we confess that we have believed his lies. In other words, we confess our sin...that we have turned to so many other things. We've given up on love and turned to the opposite of love. But we thank you Lord that even that exhibits your love for us; so we thank you Lord God for your grace, and we ask that you would fill us, that you would be the

faithfulness on us, the truth around our waste, that you'd be the peace on our feet, the righteousness on our chest, the hope on our heads, that you'd be the faith that we pick up for quenching the fiery darts of the evil one. Thank you that you hand us yourself; You are the sword and we wield you; we speak you Lord Jesus. Wow! In your name, we pray. In your name, we worship. In your name, we commune... Lord Jesus, Amen.

Benediction

God is love. All authority is yours...every victory is yours...so that should raise an obvious question: Why are we afraid? So this week, pay attention to your fears. I don't mean obey them, just observe them because they're actually not yours and you're going to give them up, and they're not very real. Because...what are your fears? Well, they're evidence that you've believed a lie. Now...you can be sad, you can say, "Ouch," Jesus was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. You can have grief. In other words, there are things in this world that hurt. You can fear God like you fear a good dentist. Like: "This procedure will hurt, but it's good."

Wrestling practice will soon be over and then you will have something eternal called faith. You won't battle the evil one forever; that faith will be an abundant gift for all of eternity. This week pay attention to your fears, and when they pop up, hunt them down and then ask yourself, "What am I afraid of? What lie have I believed that I would be so afraid now?" Then preach the gospel to yourself. Preach Truth to yourself, and then repent, then worship and be free. He has done it; He has overcome. Believe the gospel. Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.

ⁱ Paul makes it clear that we all wrestle against demonic spirits, but in certain extreme cases, they can take over a person's body for a time. For years, we prayed for one friend in particular. Over and over, I'd see Jesus conquer, and yet, it was such a wrestling match—a struggle. I would pray, "Jesus it's obvious that Satan himself is no match for you, that you've already won, and he's utterly defeated by the mere manifestation of your presence. So, why hours and hours of wrestling?" And I think I got an answer, these are my words, but I think this is His answer: "Peter, how else could I get you to care for my beloved for hours and hours, to walk through her life and shine my light in every dark corner of her soul? And how else am I to grow faith, hope and love in you? I'm training you. I'm discipling you; I'm making you like myself."