



## CONTENDING IN FAITH

### #9: THE PEACEMAKERS

November 4, 2018

Pastor Keith Jenkins

#### BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

*"God gives us  
battle strategies.  
He gave them  
to Joshua at Jericho.  
To Jehoshaphat.  
And he gives them  
to us...to secure peace."*

–Pastor  
Keith Jenkins

*"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violent assault, and violent men seize it by force..." (Matthew 11:12)*

*"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12)*

*"Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:13-17)*

*"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)*

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5: 17-21)*

#### MESSAGE SUMMARY

The Holy Spirit would desire for us to be armed to contend for all the provisions won for us through the atoning death of Jesus. It starts with a mindset. All of the blessings that Jesus has won for us through his death, must be contended for. In Exodus, God promised the Israelites the land, but in order to possess it, they had to contend for what God had given them.

There is an enemy bent on destroying every good thing God would want for your life. If the Church is busy arguing about things of the flesh or is in conflict with each other, we are not standing guard against the devil. Our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual. When you pray you are engaging in spiritual battle. The Holy Spirit wants to equip you every day so that you can be victorious in Christ in the midst of opposition. The battle begins with our mentality. We often function like Christian atheists; we say we believe God, but then in practice, we don't act like we trust Him. A stronghold is a place where the enemy is protected and supplied. As our minds are renewed, strongholds are stripped of their fortifications and supplies. The acronym HALT can help us identify where we often have temptation and are more vulnerable to attack (when we are hungry, angry, lonely, tired).

The battle changes when you are in community. Sometimes we may need someone to meet us at more than halfway. Sometimes we may need to go more than halfway to remind others that they are not fighting by themselves and that we are contending for one another in community. Christians are to be ambassadors of Christ's love, making peace amongst men. We are called to contend for people. Our world needs the peace of God.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.*

### LEAN IN

***These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon?  
Why was it significant to you?
2. Last time we met, we talked about being peacemakers. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? How has it impacted your life?

### LOOK DOWN

***These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.***

***Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max***

1. In Ephesians 6:13 Paul says "you may be able to stand your ground."  
What do you think he means by this?
2. What might the 'evil day' in Ephesians 6:13 refer to?
3. In 2 Chronicles 20:15-25, the Israelites go into battle with the worshipers leading the way.  
Why might God have chosen this battle plan?
4. What do you think it means that God has committed to us the message of reconciliation?  
(2 Corinthians 5:19)

### LOOK OUT

***These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.***

***Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max***

1. How would you be at risk if you went into a physical battle without armor?
2. Do you think the admonitions in Ephesians 6 are applicable to the church today?  
If so, how?
3. What do you believe about spiritual forces? What difference does your belief make in the way you carry out your Christian life?
4. In Joshua, God instructed the Israelites to walk around the city of Jericho and blow horns to conquer it. How might we discern what God's strategy is?

### LOOK IN

***These are questions that help you consider personal application.***

***Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max***

1. How is the enemy attacking, distracting, irritating, or attacking you? What forms may the enemy attacks take in your life? When does the enemy come in and divide us?
2. How is the enemy gaining access? When does the enemy attack?  
When am I most vulnerable to attack?
3. How am I fighting the enemy? (If we don't change our tactics, the enemy doesn't need to).
4. Who knows about your struggles? (Who knows you well enough to keep you accountable, pray for your struggles, encourage you, or otherwise contend for you?)

**DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS,**  
*continued*

**LIVE IT OUT**

*These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.*

**Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.**

1. What battle strategies do you need to put into action to thwart the devil's attacks?
2. What is God asking you to do (to contend for a brother or sister, to resist the enemy, to be an ambassador of Christ's love)?