**August 2024**

***John 14: 12***

Greater works than these shall you do:

***preaching, teaching***

***healing.***

**Authority of the believer**

What is authority

Matthew 28: 20 (***Power*** – authority or influence or jurisdiction).

Mark 16: 15 – 18 & Luke 10: 19 – 20 (***Dynamis*** –miraculous power /ability).

***Genesis 2:17***

There was a tenancy agreement with a condition that was breached. Adam was evicted and an illegal squatter took up residency, who now had the keys.

That dominion was handed over to Satan for a season, ***but Jesus won it back through his death and resurrection***.

***Luke 10: 20***

***Subject*** means:

To subordinate, to obey or submit to one’s control.

* Jesus transferred all his authority to the church.
* God himself is the ***power*** behind the authority.
* To understand this transfer of authority, the fall of man must first be understood in Genesis.

Genesis 1: 26 - 28

Adams dominion was confined to earth, not heaven.

The church now has the authority to rule and reign in two kingdoms – ***heaven and earth.***

* God’s blessing to man.
* Adam was originally the prince of this world. He was given ***dominion*** (to have rule, reign or subjugate which means to bring under control).
* He bowed his knee to the devil who became the ‘god of this world’ (2 Corinthians 4: 3 – 4). Earth which was once blessed was now cursed.
* Luke 4: 6 - all this ***power*** ***(authority)*** was delivered unto me.
* Satan had the right to rule over us until we became new creations in Christ (born again). Jesus called him the ***prince of this world (x3)***.
* Colossians 1: 12 (we have been delivered from the power of darkness).

Seated with Jesus (to share his throne & authority)

***Heavenly places***

-Heaven itself, the abode of God and angels.

-The lower heavens, of the starts (celestial) or outer space

-The clouds or sky.

(Atmospheric region).

Ephesians 1: 3

***High places***

Eph 3: 8 - 10

Col 3: 1 - 3

1 John 2: 15-17

Ephesians 1: 16 – 23

* The exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe.
* ***Far above*** (over) ***all*** principalities, powers, might and dominion.
* 1 Cor 15: 25 (must reign till he has put all enemies under his ***feet***).

Ephesians 2: 1 – 7 (seated together in heavenly places in Christ).

* We have been made alive ***together*** with Christ.

Ephesians 6: 12 (we have dominion and authority over all principalities and powers operating in the spirit realm – same as the head). ***Delegated power***.

* When Jesus was raised from the dead, we were raised from the dead.

The least in the body has more authority than John the Baptist.

When we are anxious and troubled, we no longer have the high ground.

* When we realise that the authority that belongs to Christ also belongs to individual members of the ***Body of Christ*** and is available to us, our lives will be transformed. *We don’t pray to God about the devil*.
* The head (Jesus) is dependent on the body (church) for carrying out his plans (Matthew 18: 18 - 20).
  + 1 Corinthians 6: 17.

***John 17: 15 - 16***

Sanctify (separate) them through your truth. Your word is truth.

* + 2 Corinthians 6: 14 – 15.
  + We are no longer at the cross, we are at the throne, with Christ, seated in heavenly places. We died with him but are now risen.

***Reign*** means – to rule or to be a king.

* + Romans 5: 17 (We shall ***reign*** in life by one, Jesus Christ).
  + John 14: 12 (greater works that these also shall he do).

***Ephesians 6: 12***

Rulers of the darkness of this world.

***Colossians 1: 9 – 13***

***Has*** delivered us from the power (*authority*) of darkness.

Christians who understand their authority enjoy victory over the devil.

1 John 4: 1 - 6 (***the greater one*** - Christ in us the hope of glory).

Unbelief doesn’t negate truth.

* We ***are*** overcomers (1 John 5: 4 – 5).
* Colossians 3: 1- 3 (Set your mind on things above).

**Fight the good fight of faith**

Paul was again in prison in Rome (about A.D. 66-67). These were essentially Paul’s last words. This was Paul’s last letter.

***Fight*** means:

A place of assembly – by implication (a contest).

2 Timothy 4: 6 – 7

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith* (firmly held).

1 Timothy 6: 12 (war a good warfare)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Passive resistance is not an option.

Maintain the high ground of authority.

Paul fought a good fight by keeping the faith.

***Kept*** means – to hold fast.

* We don’t fight the devil. We resist him by fighting the good fight of faith.
* We have the authority ***now*** to enforce his defeat in the spiritual & natural realm, just as Jesus did (*we rule and reign as kings in life* - Romans 5:17).
* Colossians 2: 13 - 15 (NLT) “He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he ***disarmed*** the spiritual rulers and authority (spoiled, stripped off). He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross”.

The keys of the kingdom are

keys of authority.

***Matt 16: 17 - 19***

***Matt 18: 18-20***

We are not fighting ***for*** a place of victory, we are fighting ***from*** a place of victory.

* + Jesus has the keys of hell and death (Revelation 1: 18).
* God’s plan was a mystery to the rulers of this world. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2: 8).
* We can’t have faith beyond our knowledge of God’s Word.
  + Remember, we are to be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. Flesh profits nothing over the spirit realm (John 6: 63).
  + We keep the faith by keeping (guarding) our hearts – Prov 4:23.
* Take note of those who can sprint to the finish line after a lifetime stand.
* We can’t fight when we are running on empty. That’s when we become spiritual hitchhikers.

David knew

the battle was the Lord’s.

Why does Paul refer to it as a “***good fight***?”

The joy of the lord is our strength.

***Nehemiah 8:10***.

***Philippians 4: 4***

***Rejoice*** / ***Joy*** gladness or cheerful.

***Luke 24: 32***

Did not our hearts burn within us.

* Goodmeans: – valuable or virtuous, worthy, honourable, noble.
* He didn’t rely on his own strength or ability, he relied totally on God.

***1 Cor 15:10***

But by the grace of God, I am what I am.

* + Eph 6: 10 (Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might).
  + Phil 4: 13 (I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me).
* When he was weak, then he was strong – (2 Corinthians 12:10).
* God’s strength is perfected in our weakness.

***Infirmity***

sickness and disease.

* A good fight is always linked to faith in God and his word.
  + Proverbs 18: 14 - The spirit of a man will sustain his ***infirmity;*** but a ***wounded*** spirit (broken or stricken) who can ***bear*** (lift up).
  + Acts 9: 15 – 16 (Paul suffered because of the name of Jesus (not to be more holy).

Mark 4: 14 - 17

* Satan comes immediately to ***take away*** the word that was sown.

Our fight is against a thief, a murderer, a deceiver and a liar.

* Affliction or persecution arises for the Word’s sake. The Word didn’t get down in the heart and take root. ***Only endure for a little while.***
* Paul’s ministry was afflicted and buffeted because of his witness of the word of God – but out of them all, the Lord delivered him (2 Tim 3: 11).
* Satan comes to ***steal*** first (remove the word from your heart).
* John 10: 10 (false teachers and false prophets).

**Resist steadfast in the faith**

1 Peter 5: 5 – 10

***Subject*** means to subordinate or submit to.

* Be clothed with humility. Resisting begins with humility.
* Cast you care ***first*** upon God and he will guide you concerning people.
  + We can’t resist if we are weighed down with cares, burdens, worries, fear and anxiety.

The responsibility of the church is not to defeat the devil. Our part is to enforce his defeat.

* + It’s hard to be ***sober*** (calm, collected in spirit) and ***vigilant*** (keep awake, watch, stay alert) when we are filled with cares.

***Mark 4: 38***

Don’t you care that we perish.

* + God ***cares*** for us (to be of interest to, or have concern for).
  + ***Devour*** means – to swallow up or drown.
  + ***Afflictions –*** sufferings and hardship for the cause of Christ.

***Resist*** – stand against, oppose or withstand (wrestle or contest).

* Psalm 23 - He prepares a place for me in the presence of my enemies.

***Steadfast***

Solid, stable, rigid, strong or sure.

***Psalm 112: 6 – 8***

***Romans 4: 18 - 22***

* + Satan has a right to roam until Adam’s lease on the earth has expired.

Just because you see the Egyptians doesn’t mean that you are back in Egypt.

* + We contact this world through the mind and physical senses.
  + Satan attacks the mind through thoughts and suggestions.
  + Romans 12: 1 – 3 (we must renew our minds to truth).
* Remember, we are in the world, but not of the world.

God is limited by us. ***Faith and believing*** is key to walking in our authority as believers.

***Mark 6: 5***

* Satan may be running the world system, but he is not running the church. He’s not dominating us, but we have the authority to dominate him (John 17: 14 – 17).
* What we allow, God will allow. God expects his church to exercise the authority it has been given and never back down.
* Attacks will come, but we are to ***resist and stand*** in our authority as believers.

Submit to God

James 4: 5 – 8

* Submit to God first, then ***resist*** the devil. Submitting to God means submitting to his word (Joshua 1: 3 – 9).

***Prov 16: 32***

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city.

* God ***resists*** (opposes) the proud, but gives grace unto the humble.
* Psalm 138: 6 - Though the Lord be high, yet has he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knows afar off.
* Resisting is speaking the word of God over circumstances and declaring the truth. Redemption is a finished work which must be taken by faith.
* Neither give ***place*** to the devil (foothold or room). Eph 4: 25 - 27 (NLT).

***2 Cor 2: 14***

But thanks be to God, who *always* leads us in ***triumph in Christ***, and through us reveals the fragrance of the knowledge of him in every place.

**How to resist and overcome in the faith**

The authority of the believer is directly connected to our union with God. ***No union, no authority***.

Firstly, we must believe

***1 Corinthians 15: 57***.

God gives us the victory.

***Romans 8: 31***

If God be for us, who can be against us.

1 John 5: 4 – 5

* Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that ***overcomes*** (subdue, conquer, prevail) the world, ***even our faith***.
* Mark 16: 17 – 18 (And these signs shall follow them that ***believe***).

John 16: 33

* In the world you shall have ***tribulation*** (pressure, anguish, burden, persecution or trouble).

Develop a strong spirit

***Strong*** – to empower, to enable or to strengthen.

***Power*** – Dominion or strength.

***Might*** – Ability, force or strength.

We operate in the Kings domain

***Proverbs 18: 14***

The spirit of a man will sustain his ***infirmity*** (sickness, disease, pain or suffering); but a wounded (broken or stricken) spirit who can bear (lift up).

Ephesians 6: 10

* Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Ephesians 3: 20

* Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, ***according to the power (Dynamis) that works in us***.

Joshua 1: 8 – 9

* Feed on the word day and night and do what it says. It will build your strength and courage. It will drive out fear.

If you take enough of God’s word long enough, it will heal you, deliver you and change you.

1 Timothy 4: 6 – 7 (NLT)

***How can you tell when you are weak?***

Your spirit is fearful, anxious, you dread, your spirit is depressed, lazy, no incentive, no excitement or drive. Always speaking negative. That’s the fruit of a weak spirit.

* ***Nourished*** up in the words of faith (feed or educate).
  + Don’t waste time arguing over godless ideas. Instead, train yourself to be godly.
* Man doesn’t have the last word. Don’t be moved by the opinions of other which have no biblical foundation.
* Eat the right think. Read the word daily and take time to meditate or reflect on its truth.
* Strength comes from ***feeding and exercising***. Satan wants us to become weak before he attacks (Jesus was hungry when the devil tempted him).
* Things that can drain our spirit (fear, worry, doubt, strife, too many involvements, or pleasing people rather than walking by faith).
* It’s not knowledge that gets you through bodily pain, discomfort or pressure, but a ***strong*** spirit.

***Gird***

To bind about like a belt or to equip.

***Isaiah 40: 28 - 31***.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength

***Isaiah 41: 10***

Psalm 18: 1 – 3 & 32 (It is God that ***girds*** me with strength).

Psalm 27: 1 (The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid).

Psalm 29: 11 (The Lord will give ***strength*** (might or power) unto his people.

***Deuteronomy 31:6***

Be strong and courageous.

Psalm 46: 1 (God is our refuge and strength).

Psalm 71: 16 (I will ***go*** in the strength of the Lord).

Psalm 91: 1 – 2 (I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust’).

Psalm 119: 28 (Strengthen me ***according to your word*** – not my circumstances).

2 Corinthians 12: 9 – 10 (His strength is perfected in our weakness).

***John 17: 15***

I pray that you should ***keep*** them from the evil (guard or preserve).

Galatians 2: 20 – (It is Christ that lives in me).

Philippians 4: 11 - 13 (I can do all things ***through Christ*** which strengthens me).

***John 15: 5***

I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit. ***For without me, you can do nothing.***

Being strong in the Lord is not about how good and perfect we are, our ability or feelings or whether we are worthy or deserving. ***It’s about having faith in what God has said in his word***.

***Luke 22: 31 – 34*** (seeking whom he may devour).

***Sift*** means – inward agitation to try one’s faith to the verge of overthrow.

Wear the protective armour of God

We have authority over demons, not peoples will. Resist the ***root*** (spirit), not the ***fruit*** (behaviour).

***Matthew 10: 7 - 8***

***Luke 4: 18***

***Acts 10: 38*** *(doing good)*

Ephesians 6: 10 – 17.

There is a connection between armour and standing.

***Power*** of his might -means dominion or strength.

***Put on*** (be clothed with) ***whole*** (full) armour of God.

***Wiles*** means trickery, schemes or strategies.

***Withstand*** means to resist.

***Stand*** means make firm, fixed or establish.

Spiritual battles can occur at all levels anywhere across this world. The believer must be prepared for all types of attack by putting on the whole armour of God.

***Principalities*** (Rulers)- indicating a top level of evil spiritual forces.

***Powers*** (Authorities) - refer to general forces of evil attacking believers.

***Rulers of the darkness of this world*** (cosmic powers) referring to the worldwide nature of this spiritual battle.

***Spiritual wickedness*** (Evil in the heavenly places)- again emphasising a battle beyond this world.

The belt of truth

A Roman soldier’s belt was made of metal and thick heavy leather and was the carrying point for his sword. The truth is the belt that holds the sword of the spirit. Without the truth, you have no weapon for warfare (“*it is written*”).

Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Word of God isn’t “***A***” truth, it is “***The***” truth.

***Psalm 119: 160***

Your word is truth from the beginning. Every one of your righteous judgements endures forever.

* John 6: 63 (His words are spirit and they are life).
* John 17: 17 (His word is truth).
* 2 Timothy 3: 16 (All scripture is God breathed).
* Psalm 119: 160 (Your word is truth from the beginning).
* Proverbs 4: 22 (The word is ***life*** to those that ***find*** them – to acquire).

Breastplate of righteousness

The breastplate protected the vital organs in battle. Our breastplate is God’s righteousness and it will ***never*** fail us. The breastplate protects our identity in Christ. We must guard our heart.

* The centre body of mass is the most exposed under enemy fire.
* 2 Corinthians 5: 21 (We have been made righteous).
* Romans 5: 17 (Gift of righteousness).
* Romans 10: 9 – 10 (The believing heart makes man right with God).

***Shod -*** to put on.

Boots shod (fully prepared) with the gospel of peace

Romans soldier’s sandals were called caligae. Very thick soles and wrapped perfectly around their ankles. They were also fitted with spikes on the souls to help them stand firm as they travelled. We also have a firm foundation in the gospel.

* 1 Corinthians 3: 10 – 11 (Jesus is the only sure foundation).
* Matthew 7: 24 (hearers &doers of the word built their house on a rock).
* Romans 10: 15 (how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace).
* Isaiah 52: 7 (The gospel is good news).

Shield of faith

***Ephesians 6:16***

***Above all*** – In addition to or besides all these.

Complex piece of armour and primary defence weapon. It was made of impenetrable wood, leather, canvas and metal and could be doused in water to extinguish the fiery arrows of the enemy.

* Faith is the shield of the believer. Trusting in God’s power and protection is imperative in remaining steadfast. Even when the battle is raging, God is always true to his promises, even when we don’t fully understand.

Doubt comes by stealing.

When you are in the Word, your shield is up. Think about Israel’s Iron Dome Defence System, protecting against incoming missiles. Detects, tracks and intercepts.

* Romans 1: 16 – 17 (The just shall live by faith).
* Romans 10: 17 (Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God).
* 2 Corinthians 5: 6 - 7 (For we walk by faith and not by sight).

A soldier’s shield was stronger when linked with others. Stay connected with fellow believers in the fight of faith.

* Hebrews 11: 1 (Faith is unseen evidence).
* If two or more shall agree (Matthew 18: 18 – 20).

Helmet of salvation

The battle ground will always be the mind, which is vulnerable to the enemies lies and deceit.

Don’t allow those fiery missiles to lodge in your thoughts and set you on fire.

***2 Cor 10: 5***

***Imaginations must be cast down.***

* Helmet (last piece to go on) was vital to protect the most vulnerable areas. His armour would prove useless if he was not equipped with the helmet.
* The helmet of salvation is the most important part of our armour as Christians. Without the indwelling Holy Spirit that enters a believer at the moment of salvation, all other armour is useless. Salvation empowers us to fight and protects us in our weaknesses. ***Without salvation there can be no victory.***
* Romans 10: 9 – 10 (requires ***believing*** with the heart and ***confessing*** with the mouth). It can’t be earned. It’s a gift from God.
* The assurance of salvation is our impenetrable defence against anything the enemy throws at us. Keep an eternal perspective. Our salvation is the most precious gift we have received (Colossians 3: 2).

Sword of the Spirit

Requires training to be proficient in a weapon system. We cannot remain unskilled in the word of righteousness. The more skilled in the word, the more effective our stand.

* The sword is a deadly weapon. In the hands of a skilled warrior, he could pierce through even the strongest armour.
* The sword of the spirit is the ***Word of God***. Every other piece of armour protects us against attacks. But with God’s word, we are able to fight and defeat ***all*** enemies. Jesus used scripture to defeat Satan in wilderness. We must do the same. When under attack, double down in the word.
* Matthew 4: 4 (It is written).
* Hebrews 4: 12 (Sharper than a two-edged sword).
* Revelation 1: 16 & 19: 15 (Describing Jesus in his glory).

Prayer

Prayer is the foundation for all Christian success. Prayer doesn’t change God, but it does change circumstances.

* In prayer we show our reliance upon God to act and move. Our entire armour is rooted in his strength. We must fight in the power of his might. The one who has won the war is with us in battle. Remember, we are fighting from a place of victory.

***Supplication***

A petition or a request – a thing asked for.

* Luke 18: 1 (men ought always to pray).
* 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 18 (Pray without ceasing).
* Philippians 4: 6 - 7 (Replace cares, worry and anxiety with prayer).
* Matthew 6: 5 (Jesus fully expects his children to pray).

**The power behind the authority**

All the authority that can be exercised upon the earth must be exercised through the church. We are the body of Christ in the earth today. ***The power is in the name.***

The name of Jesus

***Subject***

To subordinate, to obey or to be under obedience.

Luke 10: 17

* Lord, even the devils are ***subject*** to us through your name.

Mark 16: 15 - 20

* And these signs shall follow them that believe. “***In my name***”.

Matthew 18: 18 – 20

* The power of agreement is connected to the name of Jesus.

Why is the name so powerful?

Philippians 2: 9 – 11 (***highly exalted*** used once – to elevate above all others).

* His name was ***conferred*** upon him by the Father (bestow as a gift, award, grant as a favour or honour).

Hebrews 1: 1 – 4

Jesus didn’t have to imitate God, he was God. All that Jesus was during his earthly ministry, his name shall be equally as powerful for the church in the earth.

* He ***inherited*** his name from God.
* John 8: 56 - 58 (before Abraham was, ***I AM****)*.

Colossians 2: 13 - 15 (NLT)

***Eph 1: 21***

Far above every name that is named.

* He achieved the authority of his name by ***conquest*** - overcoming Satan.
* Hebrews 2: 14 – 15 – through death, Jesus destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

John 14: 12 – 14

Whatever you ***ask*** (demand) in my name, I will do it.

Prayer is only effective when prayed in the name of Jesus.

***Remember***, you are asking the Father in Jesus name.

John 15: 16

John 16: 23 - 26

Prayer (James 5: 14 - 16 AMPC)

* Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed *and* restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man ***makes tremendous power available*** [dynamic in its working].

***Avails much:***

Means a force or power. To be of use or advantage

Acts 4: 7 – 12 & 16 - 20

* By what ***power*** (Dynamis) or by what ***name*** (authority) have you done this? Stands before you ***whole*** = sound.

If you remove the name, you remove the power.

* The devil has tried to stop or limit the use of the name of Jesus through religion, traditions of men, oppression or fear of punishment.
* The religion leaders directed the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus.

Acts 19: 13 - 17

The sons of Sceva tried to use the name of Jesus in their incantation.

* ***Adjure*** – To charge or solemnly implore.
* Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you? ***No Authority.***
* Only believers can overcome in the name of Jesus (1 John 5: 4 – 5).

**Don’t think and act like the world**

***Matthew 18: 18 – 20***

To make disciples requires a kingdom focus, teaching disciples to obey all the commandments Jesus gave us.

Romans 12: 2 - 3 (NLT)

Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person ***by changing the way you think***. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

* ***Renewing*** – A renovation or a complete change for the better.
* ***Mind*** – Intellect, thoughts, understanding.

***Love not the world (system)***

World affairs or things earthly. The circle of earthly goods, riches, advantages and pleasures which although are fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ.

1 John 2: 15 - 17 (Love not the world).

* Desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes, pride of life.
* All temptation stems from these.
* Satan temped both Eve and Jesus in these areas.
* Don’t love the “*Babylonian System*” where man is trying to meet his own needs without God.
* In him we live and breathe and have our being (or exist).

John 15: 19 – 20

* The world hates you.

James 4: 4 (NLT)

* Don’t you realise that ***friendship*** (fondness) with the world makes you an enemy of God. A ***friend*** of the world is an associate.

Galatians 1: 10

* Don’t be a man pleaser. To please men is be agreeable with them.

Think about what is:

-***True***

***-Honourable***

***-Right***

***-Pure***

***-Lovely***

***-Admirable***

***-Excellent***

***-Worthy of praise***

Philippians 4: 8 (NLT)

* Renew your thinking.
* Fix your thoughts on God and his ways and attributes.

Colossians 3: 1 - 3

* Set your ***affection*** (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth.
* We are dead to this world and our ***life*** (Zoe) is hid with Christ in God.

2 Corinthians 4: 16 - 18

* Don’t focus on the things that are seen. Have a kingdom perspective.

2 Corinthians 6: 14 - 18

* Don’t be ***unequally yoked together*** with unbelievers. To have fellowship with one who is not an equal.
* We have a command to separate ourselves from the world.
* Come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing.
* God warned Israel through Moses – (Deuteronomy 7: 1 – 6).

Titus 2: 11 – 15 (KJV & NLT)

* Grace is not a license to sin. It teaches us how to refuse or reject this ungodly world.

**Don’t remain unskilled in the word**

The Word is your greatest weapon against Satan. It will protect you against ‘*identity theft*’ first.

Matthew 4: 4 (John 10: 10)

Rema is the Spirit inspired understanding

* Man shall not live by bread alone but by every ***word*** (*Rema*) - that which has been uttered / utterance. If we have the Logos (written word), revealed knowledge will come through the Rema.

Hebrews 5: 12 – 14

***1 Peter 2: 1 - 2***

Babies begin with milk – ***that you may grow thereby***

We must grow spiritually and learn to discern good and evil through training

* We cannot remain unskilled (babies) in the word of righteousness.
* (*NLT* – For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn’t know how to do what is right).
* ***Unskillful*** – inexperienced or ignorant.
* ***Strong meat*** – solid, stable, steadfast, sure. A rock foundation.
* ***Use*** – practice, habit or custom.
* ***Discern*** – distinguish between or judge.
* If you are led by feelings alone, you will always remain a baby Christian.

1 Corinthians 3: 1 – 6

* If we act like the world, we remain babies. We begin with milk, but God expects us to grow spiritually and take the meat of the word.
* Envying, strife and divisions (factions) there is confusion and every evil work (James 3: 16).

2 Timothy 2: 11 - 15

***Hebrews 4: 11***

Let us ***labour*** therefore to enter into the rest.

* ***Study*** – Give diligence or be diligent. To labour or make effort.

If any doctrine makes provision for the flesh, it’s not of God (red flag). The words of Jesus are Spirit and they are life ***(John 6: 63)***

* ***Rightly dividing*** – To make a straight cut, to dissect (expound / explain) correctly. To proceed on straight paths, hold a straight course. To teach the truth directly and correctly. The word will keep us on “*True North*”.
* The cross is the great divide – separating the old and the new.
* ***Vein babblings*** – fruitless discussions / useless matters.
* Avoid worthless, foolish talk that only leads to more godless behaviour.

Luke 24: 25 - 31

* The two disciples reasoning was based on circumstances, events and natural understanding. That’s why they were sad.
* They were dull of hearing because they were ***slow of heart*** to believe.

The word of God opens our spiritual eyes to see truth.

* ***Expounded*** – To explain thoroughly or unfold the meaning of what is said.

***Knew him***

to recognise, perceive or to become fully acquainted.

* Jesus explained in ***all the scripture*** the things concerning himself.
* Their eyes were open and they ***knew him***.
* Their heart ***burned*** within while Jesus talked and ***opened*** the scriptures.
  + Burn also means light.

***Luke 10: 38 – 42***

Mary chose that good part (the word).

* + Open thoroughly, to expound or cause to understand.

Palm 119: 105 & 130

* The word is a ***lamp*** to your feet and alight to your path.
* It’s a search light for illumination of the spirit.
* The word will set our spirit on fire because of revealed knowledge.
* ***Keep*** (guard) the word in your heart (Psalms 119: 11 & Proverbs 4: 23).

**Don’t seek the approval of people**

***Approval addiction*** (performance addiction). Being addicted to others approval can result in

-***Depression***

***-Guilt / shame***

***-Fear of rejection***

***-Unworthiness***

The only approval we need is from God.

Galatians 1: 8 - 10

* NLT – “Obviously, I’m not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ’s servant.”

Galatians 2: 9 – 14 (NLT)

* Paul challenged Peter (pillar of the church) because of his hypocrisy.

***John 5: 39 - 41***

And you will not come to me that you might have life. ***V41 (NLT) - Your approval means nothing to me.***

John 9: 19 – 23 (Pharisees did not believe)

* Parents of the blind man feared the Jews.

John 12: 42 – 43

* They loved the praises of men more than the praises of God.

***1 Samuel 15: 23 (NLT)***

Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft and stubbornness as bad as worshipping idols.

1 Samuel 15: 22 - 24 (King Saul failed to destroy the Amalekites).

***Proverbs 29:25***

The fear of man brings a snare (trap or hook).

* Saul failed to obey the command of the Lord. He was deceived.
* To obey is better than sacrifice.
* Saul feared the people and obeyed their voice.

***Unauthorised***

Words that are void of power and authority.

**Don’t speak unauthorised words**

John 14: 10 (NLT)

Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak ***are not my own***, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.

John 12: 49 - 50 (NLT)

I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me ***what to say and how to say it***. And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.

**Two things that can hinder our speaking with authority**

Traditions of men make the commandment of God of no effect. *Deprived of force &* *authority* (Matthew 15: 1 – 6)

Not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God leads into error. (Matthew 22: 29) *Faith begins with knowledge of the word.*

Luke 1: 18 – 20

***Matthew 6:31***

Therefore, take no thought saying…..

* His words were governed by natural circumstances.
* His tongue was silenced until, the child was born.
* Words can abort or delay the plans and purposes of God.

Consequences (Don’t follow the mob think)

Numbers 13: 27 – 28 (God said search the land ***which I give you***).

* That evil report cost Israel 40 years in the wilderness.

Luke 9: 51 - 56 (2 Kings 1: 9 – 13. Elijah).

The disciples had an issue of pride and superiority. Our words should minister life, not death, freedom, not bondage.

* Samaria was south of Galilee and many Jews travelling to the temple at Jerusalem avoided this area because of the hatred between Jews and Samaritans. Jews saw them as heretics and half-breeds.
* Jesus rebuked them – ‘*You don’t know what manner of spirit you are of*.’

2 Corinthians 5: 17 – 20 NLT (Ambassadors for Christ)

***Romana 8: 33***

Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?

* Ambassadors only speak the words of those who send them.
* When we speak authorised words, we have ‘***diplomatic immunity’***.
* The accuser of the brethren can’t lay an accusation against us.

**Keep going forward and don’t look back**

***Lamentations 3: 22 – 23***

It is the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed. Because his compassion fails not. ***They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.***

Philippians 3: 13 – 15

* Forgetting the past qualifies you to reach forth.

Failure doesn’t disqualify us.

* Reaching forth qualifies you for the prize.

***2 Timothy 1:12***

For I know whom I have believed.

* ***Apprehended –*** to take eagerly, to seize or possess. To attain.

***1 Peter 5: 7***

Casting all your cares upon him, for he cares for you.

* ***Forgetting -*** to neglect, no longer care for.
* ***Reaching forth*** – stretch out to or toward, straining. (used once in Bible).
* ***Press*** – to seek after eagerly or pursue. It can also mean persecution.
* ***Mark*** – goal (only used once in the Bible.

***2 Cor 7: 2***

Receive us; we have wronged no man, (***done no wrong***) we have corrupted no man (***not led astray***), we have defrauded no man (***not taken advantage***).

Acts 26: 9 – 11

* ***Many*** (great numbers) Christians were put to death on Saul’s approval.

Hebrews 10: 35 – 39

***Genesis 19: 26 -*** Lot’s wife looked back.

***Exodus 14: 10*** - Better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

***Bondage is not better*** (Exodus 16 & Numbers 11)

* ***Draw back*** – cower or shrink
* ***Perdition*** – destruction or ruin.

John 6: 59 - 69

***Apostacy***

To abandon or to fall away

* ***Offend*** – to entrap, trip up, stumble, entice to sin, apostacy or displeasure.
* Many ***went back*** and walked no more with him.
* We ***believe*** and ***are sure*** that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

**Are you a hostage or rescuer**

***What is your identity.***

Are you a grasshopped in your sight or a giant killer.

***Galatians 1: 4***

We ***have*** been delivered from this present evil world (age) according to the will of God and our Father).

Colossians 1: 13 – 14

* Delivered means – ***rescued***.

Psalm 107: 2 – ‘Let the redeemed of the Lord say so’.

* ***Redemption*** - payment of a price to secure release (purchase or ransom).
* Sinners are slaves to sin (hostages). They can’t set themselves free. Once redeemed (set free), they become rescuers.

Hostages and rescuers are different in every respect.

***Hostage -*** Broken, chained, hopeless, in bondage, despair and resignation. They can’t rescue anyone. ***Satan is an identity thief***.

***Rescuer*** – Free, trained, equipped, focused, determined, fearless, fighters, unmoved by obstacles or mountains. ***They get the job done at all cost***s. They know the rules of engagement and overcome strongholds.

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

***Strength is for serviced, not status.***

* Power and authority have been given to us.

***Matt 28: 18 - 20***

All authority has been given to us.

***Mark 16: 15 – 20***

The church has been mobilized to rescue others.

* ***Some that have been rescued, believe they are hostages again*.**
* We are here to change the world, not the other way around.
* The events of this world have no bearing on our assignment (Rescuer).
* When conditions in the world get worse, we need to be ready to help and show the way to freedom. We are here for such a time as this.
* Jesus was our ransom, surety, our guarantee. We have his assurance that all the provisions of the new covenant will be carried out.

**Strongholds must be pulled down**

There were some false teachers jealous of what Paul was doing and attacked him, claiming that he was not a true apostle (tough in letters but weak in person). They accused him of simply acting from human motives.

***War after the flesh***

To serve in a military campaign. We are soldiers in the army of the Lord on active service.

2 Corinthians 10: 3 – 5 (warfare)

* The context is Paul defending his apostolic authority, but the spiritual principle is his strategy on how to deal with deception.

What is a stronghold

* ***Might through God –*** powerful or capable.
* ***Pulling down*** - the utter destruction of or the total removal of a barrier, an obstacle or a stronghold (nothing left behind). All built on lies - human reasoning.
* ***Strongholds*** – (fortress) a paradigm or a way of thinking that goes so deep into the mind that it becomes a part of you. A stronghold will affect what you think, therefore how you feel and how you behave, which will produce a pattern in your life.

***Paradigm***

A perspective or a way of looking at something.

A stronghold can be arguments or reasonings to fortify an opinion and defend it against opposition.

* ***Imaginations*** - reasonings, thought patterns, a mindset or deceptive paradigms.

2 Peter 1: 1 - 4

When you understand the God side you will understand the man side (which is our response).

* These things that keep us from truly knowing God are taken down.
* Grace and peace be ***multiplied*** through the knowledge of God.
  + God’s word is his promise.
  + A promise is a self-committal. God is committed to his word.
* Deception and lies can warp our view of who God is, and once our view of God is warped, everything about us becomes warped.

What we believe about God will affect every aspect of our life.

* + If we see God as angry and vengeful, we can become religious.
  + If we see God as never punishing sin, we can become carnal.

Judges 6: 12 – 16 (Gideon called to defeat the Midianites)

* The angel declared, ‘***the Lord is with you mighty man of valour*.**’
* Go in this your might, and you shall save Israel. Have I not sent you?
* Gideon had a poor self-image (like many of God’s people today).

Genesis 3: 1 – 7 (NLT)

* Did God really say?

***Proverbs 30: 5 - 6 NLT***

Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection. Do not add to his word, or he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.

* A lie is anything that contradicts the truth.
  + Proverbs 30: 5 – 6 & Revelation 22: 18.
  + John 14: 6 & 17: 17.

Change the way you think

Philippians 4: 6 – 8

Satan uses fear to control our thought life. We can stop that on the authority of God’s Word.

* Once you recognise a lie, you can remove the stronghold of wrong thinking by changing the way you think.
* You overcome thoughts with words.

Matthew 6: 25 - 31

* Don’t take the thought saying. A wrong thought unspoken is stillborn.

***Lean not***

Don’t rely on or trust in your own understanding.

Proverbs 3: 5 – 6 (***understanding*** - knowledge or wisdom).

* In ***all*** your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.

**Remain fully persuaded**

Our authority is connected to our ***believing***.

It’s not based on religious experience or church attendance or performance or even knowledge. ***Do we believe?***

Romans 4: 16 – 22

* Abram was ***not weak*** in faith (feeble, without strength or powerless) but fully convinced.

***Hope***

Expectation or confidence.

***Hebrews 11: 1*** *Hoped* means expect or trust.

* ***Considered not*** – observe fully or fix one’s eyes or mind upon.
* He ***staggered not*** at the promise of God through unbelief (to separate, hesitate, oppose, doubt, waver or withdrawn from).
  + James 1: 5 – 8 (***wavering*** has the same meaning as ‘staggered’). We must be single minded concerning the things of God. If we waver, we stagger. A double minded man is ***unstable*** (restless) in ***all*** his ways
* ***Fully persuaded*** means - complete assurance, most surely believe, to fully know or make full proof of.

Genesis 15: 1 - 6.

* According to that which was spoken.
* Abram agreed with God and trusted what he said.
* Abram was not rewarded through any action on his part, he simply ***believed***. Christianity is right believing, not religion.

Genesis 17: 1 – 8 (God made a covenant with Abraham).

***Abraham:***

75 yrs. when he left his homeland,

about 85 yrs. when he received God’s promise and 99 yrs. when his name was changed.

* As far as God was concerned, it was a done deal “***As for me***”.

I’m Abraham, the father of many nations.

* The name change was necessary to bring the promise to pass. Abraham now called things that be not as though they were.
* Genesis chapters 17 – 21 was a one-year time span.

Genesis 22: 1 - 12

* This was a great ***test*** of Abraham’s faith. Everything in the natural was screaming ‘***no’***.
* Abraham spoke faith – “*We will go and worship and come back*.”
* Hebrews 11: 17 – 19 (NLT) – Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again.
* Because Abraham did not withhold his son, God did likewise (covenant).

Matthew 7: 24 - 27

* Hearing and doing builds a solid foundation. We can be wise or foolish.

Jesus is the stone which the builders rejected.

* There is only one foundation - Jesus Christ.
* Rain will decent, floods will come and winds will blow.
* As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without ***works*** (*an act or action*) is dead (James 1: 26).

Developed patience

James 1: 2 – 4

* ***Patience*** (endurance) has a chance to grow when your faith is tested.
* Hebrews 6: 10 – 12 (through faith ***and*** patience we inherit the promises).
* Hebrews 10: 35 – 39 – For you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise.