

Armed for Battle 1 for website

Introduction

Today we are beginning a new message series entitled **Armed for Battle**. The purpose of this series is to equip God's people to recognise the spiritual realities of the season we are in, to stand with clarity and faith, and to engage the battles of our day with the weapons God has given us. This is not a series about fear or striving. It is a series about readiness, maturity, and partnership with God. Scripture teaches us that entering God's promises often requires a shift—not because God changes, but because seasons change and what is required of us changes. Today I want to lay a foundation for that truth and begin to equip us with two essential weapons for engaging in inevitable battles: **prayer and fasting**.

When we look at the Israelites in the desert. They were in a wilderness of sorts. Not much grew there. It wasn't a fruitful place (externally). Although we know the Lord was testing their hearts and working at a heart level, which he loves to do in seasons of hiddenness and winter. It was a dry and thirsty land. They had to trust the Lord for the most basic of needs. The Lord provided for them manna. Their shoes and clothes did not wear out. They were led clearly by a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. They did not experience war. They did not have to plough or sow seeds, or harvest, or keep animals. They did not have to work in this regard. They were in a wilderness yes, but God kept them. Their goal was to enter the promised land.

But seasons do not stay the same forever. There comes a time when God moves us from learning dependence in hidden places to walking in responsibility and obedience in open places. And when that shift happens, we must not assume God has changed—rather, we must discern that the season has changed.

When the season finally changed and they entered the promised land, everything changed. God hadn't changed, their season had changed and the requirements of them were different. Think about that for a moment. God hadn't moved or changed. Their season had changed. God had prepared them for this. What was required and expected of them was different.

They were not fed by manna. Their clothes and shoes wore out. They had to work for their food. They had to plough and sow and plant and reap, winnow, grind and bake. God had moved on and they needed to move with. Yes, they were entering his promises, and their promised land – a land flowing with milk and honey, but it required more from them! It looked different to what they were used to.

God took care of the Israelites in the wilderness, teaching them to rely on Him. The season then changed, but it was the same God who was going to take care of them. They could still trust Him, - in fact they would need to use their intimate knowledge of a trustworthy God... and the lessons they had learned in the wilderness.... It was just going to look different.

Jos 5:12 (NKJV) Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

So the question becomes: what exactly was different about the promised land? And what should we expect to be different when we step into our own “promised land” seasons—new territory, new assignments, and new levels of responsibility?

How was it different? How can we expect things to be different in this season?

War

Possessing the land required war, it required a fight for every bit of land promised to them.

Jos 1:2-4 (NKJV) "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. [3] Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. [4] From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.

God had promised them this territory and in fact had said he would “give it” to them. But they still had to fight for it. One battle at a time. God was going to “give it to them” but there was resistance. God uses the resistance to help us get stronger.

When we have to fight and stand and endure and wage war, it's not because God is not doing His part, it's because while we are doing what we are doing, we are growing stronger and when we possess the land, we will be stronger from the fighting.

Exo 23:29-30 (NKJV) I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. [30] Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.

God loves to give us our territory, our victories, our promised land, one bit at a time.

Now this is where we must make it personal, because the principle is not only for Israel—it is for every believer who is stepping into God's promises. If God has spoken, there will be something to possess, and there will often be resistance to overcome.

I want you to reflect on where you are at personally. What promises has God given you? There will be warfare to possess those promises. Inevitably. They will not just happen.

1Ti 1:18 (NKJV) This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,...

- What has God promised you in this season?
- What has God promised us as a church?
- What inheritance words has He given us?
- Are we standing on these in faith, using these in prayer and warring for them?

War.

- Sometimes walking in integrity and honesty is war.
- Sometimes being patient in trials whilst remaining in faith is war.
- Sometimes challenging people with the truth is war.

- Sometimes walking in forgiveness and grace towards those we deem to be undeserving of it is war. It's war over own hearts and God's forgiveness towards us.
- Sometimes choosing to not judge is war.
- Sometimes showing love and mercy is war.
- Sometimes giving and generosity is war.
- Sometimes it is confronting what others are not, or being a voice for the voiceless.
- Oftentimes praise and worship and prayer and fasting are war.
- And many times standing on God's word in faith and choosing to believe and declare His promises is war!

We pray because there is resistance to the will of God. We pray because we need God to intervene and help us. We pray because we can only take the land He has given us when He helps us. We stand on his word and declare it because it has creative value, it always accomplishes that which it was sent for, it is powerful, it is a sharp two-edged sword. It is alive and active. That is powerful!

Jos 11:23 (NKJV) So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes.... That's leadership.

- Who has God called you to fight for?
- What burden is He wanting you to pick up?
- Whose inheritance are you called to fight for?

Jdg 1:3 (NKJV) So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him.... That's brotherhood.

Who has God called you to fight with?

Sometimes the war God wants us to fight is not necessarily one we will stand to gain from immediately. Standing with your brothers. Applying yourself, your strength, your energy, your resources for your brothers. Fighting their battles with them.

If we look at the children of Israel once they had crossed into the promise land, they began to take the land. The defeated Jericho, and then Ai, and the Lord gave them a different strategy for each battle. We need His strategies for the battles that face us. Sometimes we need a new strategy for every day, sometimes for every week, sometimes for every challenge or every season. But we do need to hear from Him and get a sense of His will.

And this brings us to a critical point: if we are going to take territory and fight wisely, we cannot do it in our own strength. God has given us weapons—spiritual weapons—and we must learn how to use them intentionally.

Weapons for War:

A. Prayer

“We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defence.”

If God is sovereign, why pray? Because Scripture shows that God's sovereignty doesn't remove prayer—it gives prayer meaning. God chose partnership. He entrusted the earth to human stewardship, and prayer is how we invite heaven's will into earth's realities. We do not pray to twist God's arm; we pray to align with His will and receive His strategies. We pray because Jesus prayed, because Jesus taught us to pray, and because His church is meant to be a house of prayer. Prayer is how we get guidance before we act, strength to obey under pressure, and readiness for battles we cannot win in the flesh. And when we pray together, God releases unity, boldness, deliverance, and breakthrough—again and again in Acts. Prayer is not our last option. Prayer is our first weapon.

I want to answer the question we all ask at some point: If God is sovereign and ruler over all, why do we need to pray? Surely He will do what He wants anyway?

The Word of God gives us clarity. And clarity helps us pray with faith, accuracy, fervency, and understanding—without presumption and without foolishness.

So let me give you some clear reasons from Scripture for why we pray, and why prayer is one of the most powerful weapons of spiritual warfare.

1. We pray because Jesus expects it—and He commands it

Prayer is not for the “prayer warriors” only. Prayer is not for the grandmothers only. Prayer is not for the leaders only. Prayer is for the whole household of God. Jesus said His house—His household—will be called a house of prayer:

Mark 11:17 (NKJV)

“Then He taught, saying to them, ‘Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”

And when Jesus taught His disciples, He didn’t say if you pray—He said when you pray. He assumed prayer would be normal Christian life.

Matthew 6:5–7 (NKJV)

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”

So prayer isn’t optional. Prayer is part of discipleship.

2. We pray because God is sovereign—and yet He chose partnership

God is absolutely sovereign. But in His sovereignty, He delegated stewardship in the earth to mankind. That’s not man being “in charge” like God is not involved—no. That is God choosing to work through people.

We see this from the beginning:

Genesis 1:27–28 (NKJV)

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

And Scripture says:

Psalm 115:16 (NKJV)

*“The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s;
But the earth He has given to the children of men.”*

So prayer is not us trying to manipulate God. Prayer is us inviting His Kingdom, His will, His intervention, into the realm where He has given stewardship.

That's why Jesus taught us to pray:

Matthew 6:9–10 (NKJV)

“In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.”

If God's will just automatically happened on earth, Jesus wouldn't have told us to pray for it. Prayer matters because God made it matter.

3. *We pray because Scripture says asking changes what we experience*

James is clear: there are things we don't have because we don't ask. And there are things we don't receive because we ask with wrong motives.

James 4:2–3 (NKJV)

“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

So prayer is not a blank cheque to get whatever we want. But it is also not a pointless exercise. There are realities God has connected to asking. And that means a prayerless believer is living below what God has made available.

4. We pray because the Spirit helps us pray God's will—and that is how “all things work for good”

We love Romans 8:28. We quote it. We put it on posters. But we must read it in context.

Romans 8:26–28 (NKJV)

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Notice: “all things work together for good” is flowing out of Spirit-assisted prayer—intercession according to the will of God. That is not passive Christianity. That is partnership. That is warfare.

4. We pray because Jesus used prayer for guidance before action

How many of us rush ahead, assume it must be God, and then ask Him to bless what we already started? Jesus didn't do that. When the crowds were pulling on Him, He withdrew to pray and got direction.

Mark 1:35–39 (NKJV)

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You.’ But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.”

Jesus did not let crowds define His calling. He let the Father define it—in prayer. And before a major leadership decision, Jesus prayed all night.

Luke 6:12–13 (NKJV)

“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and

continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.”

So prayer is not only for crisis. Prayer is for direction. Prayer is for decisions. Prayer is for strategy.

5. *We pray because it strengthens us to obey under pressure*

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed Himself into obedience. And He told the disciples to pray, not because prayer is religious, but because prayer keeps you from entering temptation.

Luke 22:46 (NKJV)

“Then He said to them, ‘Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.’”

And Jesus said something so important:

Matthew 26:41 (NKJV)

“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Prayer is the place where willingness becomes strength. Prayer is where calling becomes endurance. Prayer is where we receive grace to do what we cannot do in the flesh.

6. *We pray because it makes us ready for battles—before the need arrives*

There are moments where the need is urgent, but the issue is deeper: we weren't ready. Jesus spoke about breakthroughs that require a prayerful life.

Matthew 17:20–21 (NKJV)

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

And Scripture shows Jesus didn't only pray occasionally—He lived a lifestyle of prayer.

Luke 5:16 (NKJV)

“So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”

That's the point: when the opportunity arises, that's not the time to start building the prayer life. The prayer life must already be happening—so when the battle shows up, you're ready.

7. We pray because corporate prayer releases unity, boldness, and deliverance

The early church was not built on entertainment. It was built on prayer.

Acts 1:14 (NKJV)

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

Acts 2:42–43 (NKJV)

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”

And when Peter was imprisoned, it was prayer that broke him out.

Acts 12:5 (NKJV)

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

There are breakthroughs that don't come through gifting alone. There are deliverances that come through the united prayers of the saints.

8. We pray because God often answers prayer by involving us

Prayer is not a substitute for obedience. Prayer often becomes the birthplace of assignment. God answers, and then He sends. God speaks, and then He uses. God burdens, and then He partners with you.

So prayer is not only, “God do it.”

Prayer is often, “God do it—and make me willing to be part of the answer.”

So why do we pray?

Because Jesus commanded it.

Because God chose partnership.

Because asking matters.

Because the Spirit helps us pray God’s will.

Because prayer gives guidance.

Because prayer strengthens obedience.

Because prayer makes us battle-ready.

Because corporate prayer releases power.

And because God involves His people in His answers.

That is why prayer is not our last resort.

Prayer is our first line of defence.

Prayer is a weapon.

And if prayer is our first weapon, Scripture also shows that there are moments when God calls His people deeper into consecration—where we intentionally quiet the flesh, heighten spiritual sensitivity, and position ourselves to hear Him.

As we begin this **Armed for Battle** series, I want you to leave today with this confidence:

- the Lord does not call us into promised land territory without also equipping us for promised land realities.
- The wilderness taught dependence—but the promised land requires possession.
- And possession often involves resistance.
- But we are not fighting alone, and we are not fighting unarmed.
- God has given us weapons that are mighty through Him.
- So we choose prayer as our first line of defence,

- and we embrace fasting as a posture of humility and spiritual focus.

As we continue in this series, we will keep learning how to stand, how to discern, and how to advance in the strength and strategy of the Lord.

Altar Call Reflection Questions

- 1. Is prayer my first response — or my last resort?**
- 2. What promise or battle am I currently facing that I have not yet fully taken into prayer?**
- 3. What has prayer become in my life: a discipline, a duty, or a living partnership with God?**
- 4. What is God calling me to commit to or realign in my prayer life in this season?**

Is He calling me to consistency, corporate prayer, intercession for others, listening prayer, or setting aside time again so that I am spiritually ready for the battles ahead?

If the Spirit has been speaking to you through any of these questions, this is not condemnation — it is invitation. God is equipping His people for the season we are in. And sometimes the most powerful step forward is simply to say, “Lord, teach me to pray again.”