

Coastal Community Church Vision

Hope beyond our brokenness

Trust in our Risen Savior

Restoration for our city, nation, and world

Today... I choose to be changed by Jesus, I choose to seek Jesus first, and I choose to join Jesus in His resurrection work.

Ear Tug. Ask Permission

We are in a fight, a fight not against people, but against the devil and all his demons. We are in a fight for our hearts, for our family, for God's Kingdom to come. We are not alone in this fight, nor are we defenseless. Quite the opposite. We have armor. We have angels assigned to each of us to protect, defend, and take ground. And what Satan hates the most is that the victory is already ours. Jesus already won. Us, little tiny us, can bind and banish and destroy Satan's demons and his kingdom of darkness with our love, with one word whispered in faith: Jesus. Our generosity demolish the enemy's plans and set captives free. Our forgiveness undoes years of the devil's scheming to destroy us. Our mercy and prayers disarm his greatest warriors. Our worship creates a wave of the glory of God which flings the enemy out. We are powerful, dangerous, victorious, and strong...together...in Christ.

The enemy hates our church. Why? Many reasons. Here's one: Last Saturday 150 sat here and celebrated Susan Reeves life. Susan died from

brain cancer at 54. She was hilarious and courageous and an amazing mom and grandma. Three people stood to speak and all of them spoke over and over about how your generosity, love, and faithfulness to Susan changed their entire family forever. Why? Because you were generous in your giving and our King's Men, our men's group, could use church funds to remodel her bathroom and laundry room so that in Susan's final years were at home with family. So for those men who did that work...bravo... you literally made an eternal impact. And for all of you...your generosity has an eternal impact...thank you. The enemy hates our church because we are generous, faithful, and love well.

The enemy hates our church because we pray and worship. We bind and cast out the enemy here so God's Kingdom can come in your life. I taught you last week that you have the authority to bind up any spiritual force of evil in the name of Jesus. I see you standing and praying with the authority God has given you. You don't ask...you command. Bravo! So keep binding the enemy, keep muting his lying hiss, and keep banishing him from your home. We will talk a lot today about how to do spiritual warfare, how to do it well, and why we do it. But before we do anything else, we need to pray. **Pray**

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

This is what was last week. The enemy wants you alone, isolated, believing lies about who you are and who God is. Paul says: Stand up for Jesus, stand for your heart, stand for what is good. And when you get knocked down, stand back up. We stand together, with Jesus. You cannot stand if you're carrying everything yourself. Standing against the schemes of the devil requires you to be strong in the Lord. Let God love you. Let others love you. Take moments, all throughout the day, to breathe in stillness and silence...to remember whose you are, to rest in Jesus' care for you, to listen to Him, to offer him the burdens that come your way so Jesus can carry them for you. Now to the verses we didn't get to last week...

Ephesians 6:14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

We stand with the truth holding all our protection together. What is the belt of truth? It's the truth of whose you are. It's the truth of who you are in Christ. Paul describes truth as a belt because a belt is one piece, solid and sturdy, that held a Roman's soldier's armor and sword to his

body...just like the belt of truth is the whole picture of who you are in God's eyes... the whole truth of who Jesus is.

So what does the enemy do? The enemy attacks you with a whole lot of lies...trying to cut your belt of truth off. You're not a good enough parent. You're ugly. You're not smart enough to handle this. You've messed up too much. God is tired of you. You'll never change and if you try to change you have to fix this all by yourself. The lies are a thousand fold and they are all designed to cut away at the whole picture of who you are in Christ and God's heart for you. Do you want the belt of truth?

Jesus, I take back my belt of truth! I am enough for my challenges with you, Jesus. I am forgiven. Jesus, I believe You are working for my best. You are helping me change in Your time and by Your plan. I take back my confidence because Jesus you are confident in me!

What's next? The breastplate of righteousness. Roman soldiers carried body armor to cover their front and back...to protect their heart. Your righteousness is your right standing with God and guess what? Your breastplate of righteousness is not your record of good deeds...it's Jesus' righteousness. What protects your heart is not how good you are...but how good Jesus is for you, on your behalf, when you made a mistake. This is so important for us to understand. Why? You don't have to wear a breastplate of righteousness. For years I wore the breastplate

of pride and defensiveness...don't admit you're wrong, don't share, don't feel, go it alone with a dead heart that at least can't get hurt anymore.

To put on my breastplate of righteousness is to stand up and take my heart back. Do you want it? Jesus, I take my heart back! Revive my weary heart. I stand with you, protected by your goodness. I take back my courage to admit when I'm wrong because I know I'm forgiven. I take back my ease to share my brokenness and pain and I take back my rest in the truth that I'm more loved than I could ever dare to hope.

So when the enemy tries to hurry you so that you do it all by yourself...stand in the truth and slow down. Laugh in the face of the temptation to believe you are better or worse than anyone and take back your breastplate of righteousness...God himself claims me, forgives me, redeems me, and protects me now.

Ephesians 6:15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Our shoes are peace; we walk in peace. We don't pray against people...we pray for people so peace will come. We forgive so there is peace with each other and we ask to be forgiven so our peace with God is maintained. We have mercy on those who have hurt us so there can be peace.

Ten years after the Civil War ended a revival broke out in this country and one of the pastors leading it was Dwight L. Moody. His worship leader, Ira, was on a boat one day and was recognized and asked to sing a worship song he wrote. But he chose to sing a worship song from his childhood instead. When Ira and the passengers finished singing, in this holy moment, a man approached Ira and asked him, "Did you serve in the Union Army during the war?" Ira said yes. The man and Ira figured out that they were in the same battle, on the same night, in 1862. And then the man said, "I was on the other side. I saw you on watch that night and while I was taking aim to end your life and you sang the hymn that we all just sang. In that moment I remembered how my mother went to church and that I had forgotten all about God. As I began to squeeze the trigger, my arm fell limp and my gun fell down. Only then did I realize that God must be mightier than me if a man can worship and I could not take the shot." Both men wept together, embracing, at peace...because God has us walk in peace. Do you want your peace back? Jesus, I take back my peace and my forgiveness. I take back my kindness and restraint. I take back my love.

Paul continues...

Ephesians 6:16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Our faith is our shield. When the enemy hisses at you with a lie, put your shield up. When you are misunderstood, put your shield up. When you are discouraged, put your shield up. You don't have to be wrecked by the enemy. Put your shield up! But why? God is not healing you to be able to handle more trauma and hurt. You're used to trauma and hurt. God is healing you to be able to handle more joy and love. God wants your heart alive!

What does it even mean to put your shield up? It means you make the choice to be grateful for what God is doing now, not dwelling in what happened in the past that hurt you. Taking up your shield means choosing love and joy because Jesus is literally using all things, even the hard stuff, to make His good and perfect will done in your life. Taking up your shield means praying when you'd rather distract yourself, forgiving when it's easier holding onto the resentment, worshipping when your heart is empty and you'd rather just numb. The Romans conquered the world because together, as a unit, Roman soldiers put up their shields together and created a shield wall. We don't take up our shield just for our own heart. We take up our shield for the person next to us. Together, as we cover each other, encourage each other, speak the truth to each other, all the enemies lies are extinguished. Do you want your shield of faith? Jesus, I take up my shield of faith. I take back my faith in You. Your

way of love is better. Your plan, your timing, is better than my own. I trust You have my best. I trust living from faith, together with my brothers and sisters, is better than living from my own power.

Now to the last of our armor.

Ephesians 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Our helmet of salvation protects our identity in Christ. In every prayer retreat, Debbie will always say to the participants, 'Pay careful attention to your grammar.' Make your grammar match the reality of your salvation. When you speak as though scarcity somehow outweighs God's generosity, your helmet of salvation is off. When you speak as though your feeling not enough outweighs God's provision, your helmet is off. When you see your life, your situation, through disillusionment rather than hope, your helmet is off. Do you want your helmet back?

Jesus, there's never been a moment that I have not been perfectly loved You. I'm not a problem or a mistake. I am perfectly loved, even when I was running and hiding. Jesus, I take back my helmet of salvation! You have goodness for me, all the days of my life, and I stand now in Your hope and Your love.

Finally, our offensive weapon. The sword of the Spirit. The sword of the spirit is actually connected to this next verse....

Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

What is Paul saying? Your weapon is prayer. Pray God's Word over your heart, over your family, over the lost and weary. Pray the hope of the Gospel into every situation, on all occasions. Speak the truth.

Trusting the Holy Spirit for the outcomes, trusting that God has it...that's praying in the Spirit and using the sword of the Spirit.

Multiple times over the past two months my friends have used the sword of the spirit to break lies I was believing by telling me the truth in love. What was happening there? I had the sword...but it was in my scabbard. I was facing a battle...and wanted to run. And they wouldn't let me break rank. There's a reason why our armor faces forward...if you turn and run, you'll get wrecked...and so will the people who were by your side.

Jesus isn't interested in you having the sword as dead weight by your side...He wants you to use it. Don't just say you're confident and then doubt it 5 minutes later...you've disarmed yourself before the enemy has even attacked. Hold onto your gratitude...don't let it go. Hold onto your faith...don't put it away. Listen to what Jesus says to you and believe!

You've got to remember...you win every time you keep your sword out, your shield up, and your armor on. Winning isn't that you avoid all suffering or that all your investments and desires work out perfectly. Winning is seeing God's Kingdom come. Winning is holding onto the person who wants to run from the battle and keeping them standing. Winning is facing the fight, and nose bloodied, still advancing forward. Winning to singing, with joy and love, in the face of hell's gates and watching them ripped off their hinges from our worship. We're in a battle, together, and together we are unstoppable. We need each other. We need all of us, standing, arm in arm, advancing together. And that's exactly what's happening here. Revival is here. Miracles are here. Jesus is here. We're not backing down. We're not running. We are standing together! Amen? Amen!

Pray**Benediction****Table Talk**