



THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

*Daily Devotion at Zion + November 8, 2020 AD + **Pentecost Season***

This Week: Prayer As Combat

Do you know who your enemies are? Do you *really* know?

Every day, Christians must engage in spiritual warfare because they belong to Jesus, who experienced it before them. Death already hounded Him during His infancy when the tyrant, King Herod tried to have Him killed (Matt. 2:7ff). Yet greater enemies lay ahead: at the start of His ministry, Jesus faced down the devil Himself (Luke 4:2), and in the years thereafter He would battle demonic spirits on behalf of the human race (even several demons at one time, cf. Mark 5:9). Ultimately, He would suffer the bitter betrayals of His disciples, too, and allow His own people to do to Him what He did not let Herod do. Grave temptation faced Jesus throughout all of these conflicts, and yet He endured, becoming a source of strength to all who must face the same enemies.

Death, sin, and the devil: these are the enemies that Christians face!

Yet we do so bravely, because we know the grave is empty and that the good news of Christ even reached the ears of those in hell (1 Peter 3:19). Today, that victory over death and hell come to us wrapped up in the words of forgiveness, for if God no longer holds sins against us, then neither will He leave us in the grave or the devil's hold. We have a mighty Protector and Captain, and therefore, we may contend "against the rulers, against authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). In this battle, our greatest weapon is what many might dismiss as the weakest thing: *devotion*, for what is devotion but the Word of God and prayer, and since both come from Christ, how can they fail?

About the Cover Art

*Twenty-one men in bright orange jumpsuits kneel before their masked captors, who brandish knives: this icon depicts the 21 Christian martyrs beheaded by ISIS in Libya in 2015. The martyrs were all construction workers, kidnapped from the city of Sirte and asked to renounce Christ. All 21 refused, and were beheaded by the sea in a video later released by ISIS. Twenty of the martyrs were Egyptian, and one was from Ghana. Lip-readers have confirmed the men were praying "Ya Rabbi Yassu," or "Oh, Lord Jesus!" as they died. Notice how their orange jumpsuits are the same color as Christ's robe, affirming that He is one of them, and they are one with Him.*₂

Paying Attention to Our Elders

The best soldiers are those who have learned from older veterans of war. Hearing the experience and wisdom of those who have actually seen battle sharpens the mind and quickens the heart of those who must soon face it. So it also goes for us as we learn to pray.

How many grandmas and uncles, grandpas and aunties have been overlooked for their spiritual wisdom and insight? Make no mistake: the woman in your family or neighborhood who begins each day with prayer is a warrior, and she likely has more wisdom to share on the subject than even she realizes. What might you learn from her? Or from the wizened old man who spends his retirement in Scripture? Perhaps its time to slow down to watch that person, listen to him or her, and find out. Battling the temptations of sin, death, and hell is real, but they're no match for an old woman or wrinkly man at prayer in the name of Jesus.

Daily Readings for the Week of Nov. 15 (Pentecost 24)

S Jonah 1:1-17a I Corinthians 10:15-24 Matthew 18:15-20	Th Nahum 1:15—2:12 Revelation 12:7-17 Luke 11:53—12:12
M Jonah 1:17—2:10 Revelation 11:1-14 Luke 11:14-26	F Nahum 2:13—3:7 Revelation 13:1-10 Luke 12:13-31
T Jonah 3:1—4:11 Revelation 11:14-19 Luke 11:27-36	Sa Nahum 3:8-19 Revelation 13:11-18 Luke 12:32-48
W Nahum 1:1-14 Revelation 12:1-6 Luke 11:37-52	

These readings correspond to pages 1117-1159 in Vol. IV of For All the Saints. To acquire For All the Saints or other devotionals, please contact the church office.

“In the Name of Jesus. Amen”

“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

Reread that passage and consider carefully what it says. St. Paul speaks of knees “in heaven,” “on earth,” and “under the earth,” that is, the knees not only of people but also of animals, angels, and the demons themselves. All of those knees shall one day bow at the name of Jesus when His rule turns from faith to sight. What does that cosmic vision have to say about prayer?

It testifies to the power of the Name of Jesus and why we use it in our devotion. By this Name, the apostles healed the sick (Acts 3:6), cast out demons (Acts 19:17), and overcame their own fears and temptations (Acts 21:13). Because Jesus carries the favor of God, His Name carries that same favor. It goes to battle for us, giving us the assurance that God is at work in all who believe and bear that Name.

We therefore do not pray to God in our own names, or for our own sakes, but for the sake and in the Name of Jesus. This sometimes surprises people: “Why do we say ‘for the sake of Jesus Christ’? What does that mean?” It means this: God is not a big, misunderstood teddy bear whom we just need to recognize for the nice guy He is, and therefore pray to Him. Rather, there is only one avenue to the Father: Jesus. If He hears a prayer, it’s because that prayer comes to Him wrapped up in the Name and faith of His Son. So (if you’ll forgive the image), we trust that Name ardently and put it on our prayers like a pointy arrowhead, aimed right at God the Father’s heart.

Yes, the Name of Jesus does battle for us, whether on earth or under the earth or even in heaven!