

Raise The Standard

- Some of the world's most spectacular events have taken place on battlefields where the armies of history met. Huge forces – on some occasions over a hundred thousand uniformed soldiers – have stretched across the plains as far as the eye could see. Such great hosts have always been organized into companies, regiments and battalions, each unit with its own commander and its own flag or banner. Once a battle begins, order and ceremony turn to chaos and confusion. Troops sometimes are scattered, cut off from their units or simply lost and disoriented. In the mayhem, soldiers separated from their units don't know if they are about to be overrun and captured by the enemy, or left behind by the advancement of their comrades. Being lost, alone and confused on a battlefield is terrifying.
- The flags and banners of an army are called STANDARDS. Historically, one of the most important and most honored duties a soldier could be given was carrying the flag. These banners were not merely for decoration; they represented the pride and purpose of the army, and served a strategic purpose. The troops stayed in their ranks and knew which way to go by following the standard bearer.
- Imagine how important it was to an enemy to capture or destroy your standard – your whole army would be thrown into confusion. So, if ever the standard bearer fell, it became the responsibility of the closest soldier to him to pick up the flag and continue the advance. "Never let the colors touch the ground" was the standing order.
- Dropping a spear or a rifle to pick up a flag doesn't make a lot of sense at first. But when you realize the function of keeping a standard held high, it becomes more important than carrying a weapon. Without it the troops will be scattered and confused. The standard is the rallying point.
- **Isaiah 59:19** So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.
- When the standard of Christianity falls and the light of the gospel is diminished, then the darkness feels at liberty to boldly assert itself. That's what is happening in our country today. If we think the answer is to hide from the darkness, we'd better think again. The answer is to RAISE THE STANDARD! God is looking for some standard bearers ... people who will get their uniform on, climb out of their foxholes, and rally to His cause!

- In ancient Israel, every man was responsible to align not only his military service but his entire life to the standard of his tribe.
- **Numbers 1:52** And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and **every man by his own standard**, throughout their hosts.
- The ancient prophets speak of God's standard being lifted up TO the people, FOR the people, and IN THE LAND.
- **Isaiah 49:22** Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and **set up my standard to the people** ...
- **Isaiah 62:10** Prepare ye the way of the people ... gather out the stones; **lift up a standard for the people**.
- **Jeremiah 51:27** **Set ye up a standard in the land**, blow the trumpet among the nations ...
- A standard is not something you can keep quiet about; it is a rallying point for God's army
- **Jeremiah 50:2** Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and **set up a standard; publish, and conceal not** ...
- **Ecclesiastes 4:12** And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and **a threefold cord is not quickly broken**.
- There are three standards that the Apostolic church must continue to lift up if we are to push back the enemy in our lives, our homes, our city, and our nation ...

SCRIPTURE

- The Bible calls itself the Word of God, the Word of the Lord, the Word of Christ, the Word of Life, the Word of Truth, the Word of Faith, and just simply "The Word." Jesus Christ is the living Word (the Word made flesh) and the Bible is the written Word. The living Word is revealed in the written Word and the written Word leads us to the living Word. They are one.
- The Word is like a **SEED** that produces eternal life in us.
1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

- The Word is like **MILK** that nourishes the new Christian.
1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:
- The Word is like **MEAT** that gives strength to the mature saint.
Hebrews 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
- The Word is like **WATER** that refreshes and cleanses us.
Ephesians 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
- The Word is like **BREAD** that is ever fresh and meant for daily consumption.
Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
- The Word is like priceless **GOLD** (an inexhaustible goldmine) and like **HONEY** that is sweet to the taste.
Psalms 19:10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
- The Word is like a **FIRE** that purges sin and like a **HAMMER** that demolishes evil.
Jeremiah 23:29 Is not my word like as a fire? Saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?
- The Word is like a **LAMP** that banishes darkness and gives direction.
Psalms 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
- The Word is like a **MIRROR** that reveals to us what we are and what we can be in God.
James 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
- The Word is like a **SWORD** that separates the flesh and the spirit.
Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- The Word is an **ANCHOR** that we can depend on in any storm.
Hebrews 6:13-19 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;
- The Word is **SUPERNATURAL** in its power!
Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

SPIRIT

- Precisely because the Word of God is supernatural, it will not operate properly except in a climate of SPIRIT. To raise the standard of the Word and not raise the standard of the Spirit leaves the church in chaos and carnality, disoriented on the battlefield.
John 4:23-24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

WHY DO WE NEED TO BALANCE SPIRIT AND TRUTH?

1. **Scripture strengthens the stakes; Spirit lengthens the cords.**
Isaiah 54:2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;
2. **Scripture is a defensive weapon; Spirit is an offensive weapon.**
Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
Zechariah 4:6 Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

3. Scripture gives me salvation; Spirit gives me relationship.

- Listen to these verses and ask yourself “what saves me?”
James 1:21 Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls
1 Peter 3:21 Even baptism doth also now save us
Acts 2:40 Save yourselves from this untoward generation
Titus 3:5 According to his mercy he saved us
Matthew 10:22 He that endureth to the end shall be saved
Proverbs 28:18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved
Luke 7:50 Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.
Acts 16:31 Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved
Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith
Romans 10:13 Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved
Romans 8:24 For we are saved by hope
Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved
Romans 10:9 If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
- So which one of these things saves me? THEY ALL DO! I am saved when I obey the Word of God, which is God’s truth. If it was God’s grace, mercy or love that alone saved me, the whole world would be saved. I HAVE TO OBEY GOD’S WORD TO APPLY SALVATION TO MY LIFE.
- Truth saves me, but there are a lot of insecure saved people! God’s Spirit works with truth to give me a RELATIONSHIP.
Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

4. Scripture gives me freedom; Spirit gives me liberty.

- John 8:32** And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- There are 206 bones in your body. They are rigid and inflexible. But God did not give you bones to restrict your movement; He gave you a skeleton to provide you with maximum mobility. Without your unyielding bones, your muscles would have nothing to work against, and you would be a blob of flesh on the ground.

- FREEDOM means, “the absence of restraint, liberation from slavery.” That’s what truth does for me!
- But LIBERTY goes beyond FREEDOM. It means, “the power to choose, lack of inhibition.”
2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
- Quite literally, God’s truth frees me from sin, but God’s Spirit allows me to ENJOY my freedom!
2 Corinthians 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

SACRIFICE

- Precisely because the Spirit of God allows me so much liberty in living the Christian life, the church cannot win this war without raising the standard of SACRIFICE. It is the third strand in the cord; it is the third standard needed on the battlefield. God is looking for soldiers who will give their ALL to His cause.
Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
- Matthew records Jesus’ words about taking up the cross right after His rebuke of Peter. Why? Because Peter was looking for an “easier way” so that Jesus would not have to suffer the cross!
Matthew 16:23-26 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
- We can talk about SCRIPTURE and SPIRIT all we want, but the real question is, “Are you willing to give up your very life to serve Jesus Christ?” Are you willing to SACRIFICE your own desires, goals and priorities to make your life count for Heaven?
- **RAISE THE STANDARD!**