

Story: Fortified Strongholds and the Courage to Stand with Jesus

Theme: Creating a strong Christian Life and having Courage to Stand with Jesus

Text: 2 Chronicles 11:11-12

Approximate Story Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Discussion Questions: 0

PBA Questions from Story: 0

Total PBA Questions: 0

Note: This worship invites the Pathfinders to take a stand with Jesus. It might be presented at the end of a program (or around a campfire before sending them to bed) when they will be able to reflect on the commitment to stand with Jesus they have made.

Fortified Strongholds and the Courage to Stand with Jesus

2 Chronicles 11:11-12

After God told Rehoboam through Shemaiah to not fight his brethren and attempt to restore his kingdom, Rehoboam built fifteen fortified cities for defense in Judah. In these fortified strongholds he placed items to make them strong. As long as Rehoboam remained faithful to God these cities were a protection to Judah. The items that Rehoboam put in the strongholds were said to make them very strong. We can be very strong strongholds for Jesus, not afraid of Satan and his allies, if we fortify our lives with the same things Rehoboam put in his cities of defense.

Captain – Jesus is our captain, our leader, without a leader soldiers fight in different directions and with different goals, a wise leader gives direction and purpose and places his soldiers where they will be able to fight most effectively. When the battle seems to be lost, a strong leader can stand strong and his soldiers rally around him, turning what seems like sure defeat to victory. During the Civil War at the First Battle of Bull Run, the brigade of General Thomas Jackson stood against a crushing advance by the Northern forces. The courage of Jackson's brigade standing under intense enemy fire gave the Confederate army time to regroup and advance to victory, and earned Jackson the nickname Stonewall because others said Jackson was standing like a stone wall. How much more can we have courage to stand for God because we follow a captain, Jesus our leader, who stands victorious before all enemies of God, with love for us, desiring only the best for each of us? Let us have the courage to stand with our leader Jesus, like a stone wall against all advances of the enemy.

Food – Food is the bread of life. God is revealed to us through Jesus who was broken (1 Corinthians 11:25) Jesus is the Word (John 1:1, 13, 14); the Word nourishes us and gives us spiritual life as food gives us physical life. We need food multiple times a day and we need the Word daily and even multiple times a day. Without food we die. Without the Word, through the Bible, and from Jesus through the Holy Spirit, we will die spiritually and, eventually, physically as well. With the nutrition supplied by the Word of God, we will have the strength, and the courage, to stand with Jesus.

Oil – Holy Spirit (Christ Object Lesson p. 404, Zechariah 4:3,6,14; Matthew 25:1-13). The Holy Spirit guides and directs us and opens our hearts to truth and teaches us God's will for us. Without the Holy Spirit to guide us we would be like Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26, doing what we think is best and not doing what God tells us is best. Like the foolish virgins of Matthew 25, we may be good people and even followers of Jesus, but without the Holy Spirit, when the crucial moment comes for us to stand with Jesus we won't be able. The wise virgins prepared themselves by having extra oil. So we can prepare ourselves by daily inviting and allowing the Holy Spirit to smooth our hearts with the love and guidance of Jesus. When we have allowed the Holy Spirit to guide us and teach us, we will have the courage to stand with Jesus.

Wine – The blood of Jesus (Matthew 26:27-28). The wine of the Last Supper represents the blood of the new covenant shed for many for remission of sins. Jesus shed his blood to cleanse our sins. In communion we remember this gift by drinking the wine. We need Jesus' forgiveness every time we sin

and He is ready and willing to forgive us. By accepting the cleansing of the blood of Jesus in our lives, we do not need to be afraid of Satan or ashamed of our past. We have been made clean. In the cleanliness of the white robes given to us by Jesus, washed in the blood of Jesus, we can have the courage to stand with Jesus.

Spear – The spear in ancient times was a weapon of defense and offense. Soldiers with long spears and shields could join together to keep the enemy from getting too close, becoming a wall of men and weaponry to thwart the advancing hostile soldiers. Shorter, lighter, spears could be thrown at the enemy while they were still a distance away and inflict damage upon him. God told Joshua to hold his spear out (Joshua 8:18) as a signal to those who were in ambush against Ai to join the battle. The spear was a symbol of God's help in the battle against the Israelites enemy and a symbol of God's willingness to fight the enemies of God's people. We can have the courage to stand with Jesus when we have our spears ready to be used as God directs.

Shield –The shield represents faith (Ephesians 6:16.) The shield of faith quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Without faith we cannot withstand the tortures and temptations of Satan. With faith we will do great things through Jesus. Hebrew 11, the Bible's faith chapter, tells how people of God stood strong through their faith. Through faith Abel offered an excellent sacrifice to God and obtained the testimony of God that he was righteous. Through faith Enoch was taken away without seeing death. Through faith Noah prepared an ark, though he could not see the rain. Through faith Abraham obeyed God and went to a land he knew nothing about. By faith Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets stood with God and, despite personal failings and shortcomings, did great things with God. Satan will attack you, you will withstand his attacks through the faith that God gives you. (1 Corinthians 10:13). Through faith, believing in things hoped for and trusting in the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1), we will have the courage to stand with Jesus no matter what happens around us and to us.

Our lives can be fortified strongholds for Jesus. By following our Captain, Jesus; by daily eating the food of the Word of God; by allowing the oil of the Holy Spirit to lead us to the truth God has for us; by allowing the blood of Jesus to cleanse our sins and lives; by taking our spears to defend against the enemy and to attack the enemy; and by using the faith God gives us to believe and trust God in all that He leads us to go and do; we will have the courage to stand with Jesus for righteousness and goodness. We need not be afraid of Satan or his friends, by daily fortifying the strongholds of our lives, we will be ready to stand with Jesus against any attack Satan has for us. If you would like to make a commitment to daily fortify your stronghold, stand with me now and pledge that you will take the courage that Jesus is giving you, to daily stand with Him.

(Prayer of consecration to stand with Jesus)