

This is a week of looking not only at the people of Perú, but also at ourselves. What is my motivation for wanting to be a misisonary to Perú? What does God mean to me? How has knowing Jesus changed my life? Questions like these are important to ask yourslef as you prepare to journey to Perú.

PART UNO

Grace and God

According to one definition, *Grace* is God's _____ given to us even though we don't _____ it.

According to John Wesley, there are three types of grace. They are _____, _____, and _____.

Prevenient Grace is _____

Justifying Grace is _____

Sanctifying Grace is _____

According to John Wesley, there are four things we use to help us to understand who God is. They are _____, _____, _____, and _____.

Personal reflection: Which of these do you use most when you are trying to understand God?

PART DOS

Peruvian Religion: A mix

In the video about the Bird of Paradise, what are some of the connections you see between the legend and the Christian faith?

What thoughts come to mind as you watch the videos showing the people climbing the mountain to worship the god of the glacier? What do you think about the fact that they are mixing ancient Peruvian practices and beliefs with Christian practices and beliefs?

PART TRES

Language and God

Some people are very immovable when it comes to Bible translations. They believe the translation they use is not only the best version available, but it is also the *only* true and accurate version available. The problem many times, however, is that the argument falls apart when we talk about people who speak another language. After listening to the interview with the Quechua woman, what facts of her story made an impression on you? Why do you think they impacted you that way?



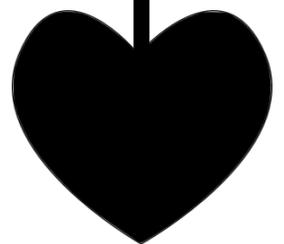
— week two —

Preparing the heart and soul

During the online portion of the training, we looked at some of the things that influence how we experience and understand God. One of the biggest factors wasn't mentioned: personal devotion. That's what we'll look at this week.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER THIS WEEK

1. How is my relationship with Jesus right now?
2. When did I first fall in love with Jesus? What difference has this made in my life?
3. If someone asked me who God is, what would I say?
4. How has my love of God made me want to be a missionary to Perú?



DÍA UNO:

PREPARING TO FIGHT



Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

-- Ephesians 6.10-13 (NIV)



BE HONEST, IF SOMEONE TELLS YOU THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A SPIRITUAL BATTLE, WHAT ARE THE FIRST THOUGHTS THAT COME TO YOUR MIND?



I have to admit that for a lot of years, whenever I read this verse I would smile and nod and say something like, “Oh, okay. Got it.” But the truth is I didn’t really get it. I mean, with my head I could understand a lot about what it means to be in spiritual battle. I’d read the stories of Paul and Peter and the rest as they worked hard to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. I’d heard about their struggles and their difficulties and the people who threw rocks and insults and those types of things. The Bible is full of stories like that. But those are *Bible people*. They lived during a time when things like that happened. I live in the world today. A world of knowledge and science. A world where we can talk to somebody on the other side of the planet *and* see a video of them of them talking to me at the same time. We’ve come a long way, baby (as the old ad said). We’ve grown past this spiritual warfare stuff. If we’ve advanced this far,

surely God has, too. As I said, with my head I understood what Paul was trying to say. With my heart, though, I didn't think it really had any bearing on my life.

Okay, you can say it. I was dumb. I was wrong. I made a mistake. I was being rather egotistical and superior in my thinking. I understand it better now, not only with my head, but this time also with my heart.

Let me put it as plainly as I know how: spiritual battles are being fought in Perú. They are also being fought in China and Brazil and Costa Rica and Poland and every country on the face of the earth. Yes, they are even being fought in the United States. I can see it now. I think when we lived there I was so involved with living and the day-to-day activities of life that I didn't notice the things I couldn't see (Paul wrote that the battles are being fought in the heavenly realms and, truth be told, we cannot see things heavenly...yet).



IF SOMEONE WERE TO ASK YOU WHAT SPIRITUAL WARFARE IS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?



Read what a couple of people have said about spiritual warfare stuff: Ed Siloso, director of Harvest Evangelism (www.harvestevan.org) says, "The Church in the West today presents too easy a target for Satan. We do not believe we are at war. We do not know where the battleground is located, and, in spite of our weapons, they are neither loaded nor aimed at the right target. We are unaware of how vulnerable we are. We are better fitted for a parade than for an amphibious landing."

John Eldredge, author of the bestselling book *Wild at Heart*, says, "The story of your life is the story of a long and brutal assault on your heart by the one who knows what you could be and fears it."

Oswald Chambers, author of the classic devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*, says, "If we are going to be made into wine, we will have to be crushed; you cannot drink grapes."

And finally, Blaine Eldredge, young son of John Eldredge, is quoted as saying, "Every man is a warrior inside. But the choice to fight is his own."

That Blaine is a smart kid. God has given us what we need to fight against the "devil's schemes" (as Paul writes in today's verses). The question remains: are we willing to fight against the powers of darkness? We can. We should.

Okay, we must. To tell the truth, we don't have a choice in the matter if we are going to be missionaries.

In Perú, some of the missionaries who live here asked God to guide them in the direction their ministry should take (all of us need to be doing this to be sure that *our* ideas line up with *God's* ideas). Through prayer they felt led to a community outside of Huancayo called San Juan de Iscos. It is a rural community complete with adobe buildings, a town square, local Catholic Church, and cows and donkeys walking down the street. As they explored the community, they discovered that although the local school is adequate, there were still a number of children who were not receiving a proper education. (Education in Perú is free to all children, but parents are still required to pay for uniforms, books, and other supplies, at costs that many families cannot afford.) Walking through the hills surrounding the community, they knocked on doors and spoke with families about the possibility of a school where their children could attend. At first the results were discouraging, but persistence and time paid off and in the end, around twenty students were enrolled. Working through the lawyer hired by The Mission Society to help out in situations like these, they received the proper approval from the proper agencies within the government and opened a school in an unused room inside of the city hall. School started well, but of the twenty or so enrolled, only about a dozen actually attended classes. This is typical in the culture, and so it was seen as a tremendous start.

In addition to classes, the team (which included both missionaries and Peruvian nationals) began a Kids' Club which met once a week on the town square. Again, they received proper approval from the proper sources. The club was timed so that students leaving the public school could also attend if they chose to (many of the kids walked a long distance to school and, with chores and family responsibilities, would not be able to return at another time). Again, like the school, things started well with children from the community coming together on Friday afternoons to sing praises to God, learn about the Bible (in a way that did not promote one denomination or Protestants or Catholics over and against the other), do a craft and share a snack.

One hot Friday afternoon, however, things changed. One of the teachers at the public school had a growing dislike of the Kids' Clubs. The ministry team never did learn exactly what the problem was, but she was bound and

determined to put an end to the stuff she considered nonsense. In the middle of the meeting, she ran out of the school gates toward the club meeting waving something in her hand like a whip. Entering the crowd of children ranging in age from about three to twelve, she began chasing them away; pursuing them down streets and alleys to be sure they would not return. In the coming weeks, some of those children never did come back to the Kids' Club meetings. Some stood on the edge and warned those brave enough to enter that "teacher's gonna' get mad."

In an effort to smooth the waters and start fresh, a meeting was held between the city council, the ministry team, and members of the local school. At the meeting, the school started by the missionaries was reaffirmed as a good and useful part of the community. In fact, the missionaries learned a number of the members of the city council had children or grandchildren in the school. The weekly Kids' Clubs were also given the green light as a vital part of the development of the families and the children of Iscos. It was a ray of sunshine breaking through the dark clouds of the past few weeks.

It, however, was not yet over. The teacher at the public school knew her freedom to chase kids away from the club meetings had been taken from her. She knew the city council had given their nods of approval. Still the children from the public school were hesitant to attend meetings. Later the missionaries learned the reason: the teacher was taking points away from the language arts grade of any student reported as attending the meetings in the park.



WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE EVENTS THAT HAPPENED IN SAN JUAN DE ISCOS A SPIRITUAL BATTLE? WHY OR WHY NOT? ALSO, IF YOU WERE THE MISSIONARIES HERE DURING THIS TIME, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN THIS SITUATION?



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DÍA DOS:

Getting dressed to go



Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

-- Ephesians 6.14-15 (NIV)

I know, I know. For some of you, today's thoughts might get a bit tedious if you don't like (or don't care) about the roots of words and where they come from. I think the journey is worth the destination though, so please bear with me for a few moments here.

There are three words of vital importance in the passage for today: truth, righteousness and peace. In English, we have at least a vague idea what these words mean. For example, if we tell someone to "tell the truth," we are expecting them to state the events of the case exactly as it occurred. If we say someone is a righteous person we either mean they are very cool (in a slang way) or that they are living their lives very closely to the biblical standards. And when we sing the old song *Let There be Peace on Earth*, we are singing about a time when, as the Bible says in Isaiah, the swords are beaten into plows. We have the basic idea of what it means to use these words. Let's dig deeper, though, and look at the original meanings in the Greek; the meanings that Paul was thinking about when he wrote this passage.

The word we translate as *truth* is *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια), and it refers to what is true in any matter under consideration, what is true in things concerning God and the duties of people regarding moral and religious truth. In a more subjective way of thinking, it is "that candor of mind which is free

from...falsehood and deceit.” In other words, it is an idea of personal excellence. As followers of Jesus Christ, we need to keep this idea in mind. We need to remember that the truth we carry is not just the word of God or the Bible stories or the preaching and the sermons. The truth we carry is also the personal excellence in which we seek to live. Too often, we as followers of Christ give 110% at work or on the playing field, but when it comes to living the right life, we settle for a lot less. We cannot afford to be doing that, especially if we accept the fact that we are indeed in a spiritual battle and need to be aware of the schemes of the devil. It is important for us to wake up in the morning, hop out of bed and gird around our waists the belt of truth that reminds us of our obligation to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The ancient Celtic Christians had a great way of reminding themselves of the completeness of Christ in their lives: they would add a prayer to the day to day routines of life. For example when they put on their belts, they would say something like: *Lord, as I put on my belt today, help me to remember that it is like the belt of truth Paul talked about. Help me to remember to be excellent in all I do for the Kingdom today. Amen.*

In the King James Version of this verse it does not use the term *belt*. Instead it talks about girding our loins. That is an allusion to the story in Exodus when God told Moses to tell the people to get ready and to have their loins girded. What God meant by that was that they had to be ready at a moment's notice to leave the slavery of Egypt. In the same way, we as followers of Christ and we as missionaries of the Good News need to be ready with the examples of our lives to give testimony to what God has done in and among us.



DO YOU GIVE GOD 110% OR DO YOU OFFER ONLY WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT?
IF THERE ARE AREAS IN YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU COULD BE GIVING MORE, JOT
THEM DOWN IN THE MARGIN.



For the word we translate as *righteous*, Paul used the word *dikaiosynē* (δικαιοσύνη). This is a word that refers in the broad sense to the person who is as he or she ought to be in their relationship with God. It has to do with integrity, virtue, purity of life, and so on of the person. This is the kind of person we look for when we are looking for leaders within the church. In a narrower sense, the word refers to the justice or the virtue which gives each person his or her due.

Again as followers of Jesus Christ, we need to be righteous people. We need to be living our lives of excellence (remember the belt of truth) as lives filled with integrity and virtue. We also need to be willing to keep our eyes and hearts open to those around us.

It was on purpose that Paul chose to equate this righteousness with the breastplate. He knew that during a battle, if a soldier got a wound in the leg or the arm, he could survive, but in order to return home to fight another day, he needed to have his vital organs—his heart, lungs, and belly—covered. (By the way, I say *he* here because during Paul’s time it was the men who fought in the battles.) In the same way, we as believers in Jesus Christ need to be certain that our vital organs are covered. We need to protect our hearts from the attacks of the devil. We need to be sure that our lives are lived with integrity and virtue. When people see us, they need to be able to see the love of Jesus Christ shining through us. They need to see the sun’s light reflecting brightly off our breastplates of righteousness. Okay, I know not many of us wear breastplates today, but perhaps as we get dressed in the morning, we can say a Celtic style prayer something like this: *Lord, as I put on my shirt today, help me to remember to live my life in a way that you desire. Help me to be pure and honest and seek the light of your love in those around me. Amen.*



WHEN PEOPLE SEE YOU, DO THEY SEE A RIGHTEOUS PERSON OF INTEGRITY?
IS THAT JUST WHAT THEY SEE, OR IS THAT REALLY WHO YOU ARE?



Finally, for the word that we translate as *peace*, Paul used the word *eirēnē* (εἰρήνη). It’s meaning is pretty much the same as we think of when we dream of peace: national tranquility, exemption from the rage and havoc of war, and so on. As followers of Christ, these ideas are good to keep in mind. But according to Strong’s Greek concordance, there is another part of peace that is important to us: there is a peace that belongs to the Messiah. This peace refers to the path that leads to salvation and to the “tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever that is.”

Paul tells us that our feet need to be shod with the readiness that comes from this type of peace. Huh? Maybe I’m a bit dense, but that confuses me a bit. *Shoes* I get. *Readiness* I get. *Peace* I get. Put them together and I get lost.

But wait a minute, let me try it this way. We are missionaries, right? We go places. Sometimes we go places a long way from home, and as the old saying

goes, “the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” As we take those steps, we’re gonna’ need some shoes to protect our feet so we can travel again whenever God calls us. When I take long walks, I like to have shoes that are comfortable and sturdy. What if the shoes I wear when I walk with God are comfortable in that I have the peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4.7) assuring me that I am a child of God, and that they are sturdy in that I know in that assurance that nothing can separate me from the God’s love, no matter what the world throws at me (Romans 8.38-39). Those are shoes that I can wear. Again, let us pray with the Celtic church as we prepare ourselves every morning: *Lord, as I put on my shoes, help me to know the comfort and security of your peace. Amen.*



ARE YOU WEARING COMFORTABLE SPIRITUAL SHOES? ARE YOU SURE YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD? IF NOT, TAKE SOME TIME IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO TALK WITH ANOTHER BELIEVER IN CHRIST TO SEE IF THEY CAN HELP YOU TO



REACH THAT POINT IN YOUR LIFE. DON’T LET IT STOP YOU FROM COMING ON THE MISSION TRIP (IT MIGHT BE THAT GOD IS PLANNING ON THIS TRIP TO HELP YOU KNOW THE FULLNESS OF PEACE).

A quick story about a man here in Perú who gets dressed for battle every day. Physically, he doesn’t look like much. He’s short even by Peruvian standards and has a club foot. Spiritually, however, he is a giant. He is a missionary to his own people. What he does is simple. He starts with prayer, asking God to reveal to him a community that is in need of the good news of Jesus Christ. When he receives a word from God (which can come to him in a variety of ways), he sets off on foot, wearing shoes of the gospel of peace. He walks, sometimes for days, until he reaches the community. There, wearing the belt of truth, he shares the truth of God’s love with the people, working beside them in the fields or in the stores. As he does this, the integrity and virtue he wears as a breastplate, helps to convince the people of the truth of the message he is bringing. He knows he won’t stay in that community, though, and so he prays for God to reveal to him a leader for the spiritual community there. When he believes God has told him who it is to be, he continues to work with that person until he is sure that they regularly get dressed spiritually for battle on their own. Then it is time for him to start praying again. This time to see where he is to go next. Over the years, this man has brought the good news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to more than 200 communities around Peru. When asked how he does it, he says he doesn’t. It is the power of God working through him as he dresses for battle.



DÍA TRES:

Shield of Faith...but in what?

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

-- Ephesians 6.16 (NIV)

Sometimes we as followers of Jesus Christ believe we have the corner on the faith market. Sometimes we believe that we have faith, and the rest of the world does not. That is a mistake. I don't think I'm going too far out on the limb if I say that every person has faith in something. I mean, think of it this way: people go to the doctor because they have faith that they will receive a proper diagnosis and a cure. People go to the store to buy groceries because they have faith the food they want will be there when they get there. They also have faith that when they get the gallon of milk home that it will be fresh and safe to drink. They don't do scientific tests to see if any poisons or garbage was added to the milk. They simply open it up, pour it in a cup and drink. That's faith. We usually don't think about it as such, but it is.

The Greek word that Paul uses here is *pistis* (πίστις), and it means just that: a conviction or belief of the truth of anything. I have faith the sun will rise tomorrow morning. I have faith that when it rains it will fall down and not up. I have faith that my children will grow up to be wonderful, productive members of society (that is also a hope, but my belief is so strong in this that I believe it can be called *faith*, as well). I also have faith that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that he came to this earth to die on the cross so that I could have a friendship with God. I have faith that the Bible is the word of God. I have faith that he will come again someday to take those who follow him home to live in the houses which he has prepared for us. All that's faith, too.

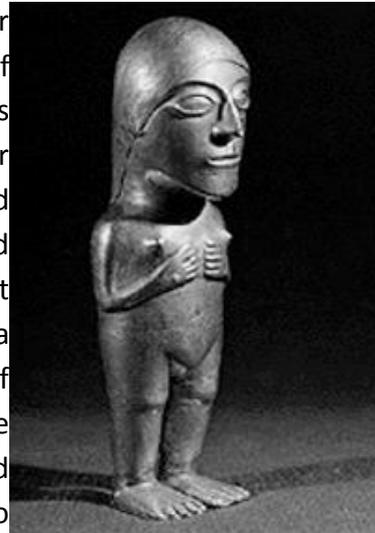


WHERE DO YOU PUT YOUR FAITH? IN THE MARGIN MAKE A LIST OF THINGS AND PEOPLE IN WHICH YOUR FAITH IS STANDING.



But that is not the only faith in the world. In Perú, there are people who believe that as well. There are also people who have more faith in their pastors or their priests than they do in the Son of God. There are some who put their faith in the stones and rocks on the ground. There are others who are convinced of the truth that sacrifices of blood will turn the gods' anger away from them. There are some who have faith that what the gods' want are children. Others believe they want dogs. Some have faith in the power of gems to change their fortune. Others are convinced of the power of the position of the stars in the sky and the astrologers who can interpret them. All these are examples of faith, too.

Faith is not new to this country. For centuries, the people of Perú have been people of faith. When they first started climbing the Andes Mountains or planting crops in the coastal deserts or settling in communities in the Amazon Jungles, God was with them. As a young boy once told me, God was tickling their hearts, letting them know that they were loved and invited to come into a relationship with God. They listened to the voice of God, but unfortunately, God's voice was not the only one resounding in their ears. The devil had some evil schemes up his sleeve, and he began to shoot fiery arrows at them, trying to get them to falter and fall. The still, small voice of God calling out to the people of this region was too often drowned out by the sweet temptations of evil. The peoples' understanding of God was not complete, and as they created their own version of the heavenly courts, the image they had of the true God was tainted. Looking at their ancient religious faith, we can catch glimpses of the one true God, but more often than not, God is hidden.



One of the main gods in which these agricultural people held their faith was mother earth, whom they call *Pachamama*. Pachamama, however, is not a god of the past. In the faith of many of the people today, even many who claim a belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God, Pachamama still holds court. The people are still very close to the earth. They still farm the land (most of them still farm as their ancestors did using hand tools or, if they are fortunate, an ox or

donkey to plow). In order to insure a good outcome for their labor and to bring in a good harvest, for centuries people have felt the need to pacify Pachamama. One way in which they do this was to pour a bit of their *chicha* (a local corn drink that is delicious) on the ground before they drink it. Another way is to erect a stone pole or pillar in the field.

In Huancayo, there is a park named Parque Tupac Amaru. It is a beautiful park with walking paths and planted flower beds and fountains (sort of a Peruvian version of an English Garden). Scattered throughout the park are a number of signs telling visitors to protect the natural environment, and at one corner is a three sided pillar with the following phrase in English, Spanish and Quechua: *La paz prevalezca en la tierra — Allin kay pacha niñaypaq kachun — The peace prevails in the earth.* When I first saw it, I thought, “That’s pretty cool. We do need to think about peace on earth, and goodwill toward all...” I didn’t read it very carefully. It says “*in* the earth” not “*on* the earth.” The pillar in the park is not a declaration of a hope for all nations. What it is is a sacrifice to the ancient goddess of the earth, Pachamama. Scattered throughout the city, the valleys and the mountains are stone pillars giving homage to one of the fiery arrows of the devil.



WHAT DO YOU THINK: ARE WE OVER REACTING WHEN WE SAY THE SACRIFICES TO THE ANCIENT GODS IS A SIGN OF FAITH IN THE ANCIENT GODS? DO WE AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST NEED TO BE WORRIED



ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS OR IS IT “JUST A PART OF WHO THEY ARE AND WE CAN’T TAKE THEIR TRADITION AND CULTURE”?

The Apostle Paul tells us to take our shield of faith with us when we go out into the spiritual battle going on around us every day. Unlike the belt and the breastplate and the shoes we talked about yesterday, the faith he is talking about is not something we wear. It is something we carry. It is something we use. Maybe it will help if we think about it this way: The belt, breastplate and the shoes are something that we put on and it is with us to protect us and encourage us. The shield, on the other hand, is something we have in our hands and we use it. Maybe we can say the first items are passively affecting our lives, but we have to actively use the shield of faith if we are going to succeed in winning a victory over our enemy, the devil.

Maybe that’s why the noun can also be used as a verb: we use a *shield* (noun) to *shield* (verb) ourselves (and those around us) from the fiery attacks of the devil. We need to be proactive in our faith. It is not something we put on

and expect to take off at the end of the day. No, it is something we use every moment of every day. It's a twenty-four hour, seven day a week job for us. We need it because those fiery arrows can be tricky.

When I think of fiery arrows I think of something I want to avoid. I think of the old movies about the Middle Ages when they are storming the castle, and those defending the castle shoot a barrage of arrows back at them. Those down below, in order to protect themselves raise their shields above their heads to make a virtual ceiling. It works. But in order for it to work, they have to *do* something.

But the barrage of fiery arrows doesn't always look like a rainstorm of danger falling on our heads. Sometimes it looks like something we want to see coming our way. Sometimes we are attacked in the spiritual battles by a job promotion that would give us a higher wage, but the salary comes with less time spent with our families. Sometimes we are attacked by the sports car we've always wanted, but the car comes with insurance we cannot afford. Sometimes we are attacked by a cool hobby that eventually leads us to use all of our time in it, even at the expense of gathering together in a community of faith (Hebrews 10.25). We have to be careful.

Let us be honest here, there are a lot of really neat things about the history and the culture of Perú. They have traditions that go back hundreds and hundreds of years. Their art is fantastic. It's neat and it is tempting to take home souvenirs with pictures of the ancient gods. The problem is that some of those souvenirs just might end up being a fiery arrow that will have a big impact on our lives if we are not careful.

Our faith needs to be strong. Maybe I said that wrong. Maybe it would be better if I said, we need to be sure we have a strong faith in the right thing.



ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS WE WERE ASKED TO DO TODAY WAS LIST THE THINGS IN WHICH WE HAVE FAITH. IS GOD ON THAT LIST? IS GOD IN THE FIRST PLACE ON THE LIST? IF NOT, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH IN THE GOD OF GODS AND THE LORD OF LORDS?



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DÍA CUATRO:

Helmet and Sword

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

-- Ephesians 6.16 (NIV)

Let's talk about salvation for a moment. That's a word we use a lot as followers of Jesus Christ. "By his blood we are saved." "Salvation comes by faith alone." "I am saved by the grace of God." The Apostle Paul said in Romans that if we confess with our lips that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved. It is an important word to talk about and to have in our minds, because when we get to Perú one of the questions we might get asked is, "When where you saved?"

What they are looking for is not a "yes" or a "no." Instead, what they want is a "yes" followed by a date, and, if possible, time and place, as well. For many of the leaders in the churches of Perú, *when* you were saved is often just as important as *if* you are saved. Some followers of Christ have no problem at all providing the answers. The date of salvation is important to them as well. For them, the moment of salvation was a hinge-point in their lives and from that moment on they knew without a shadow of a doubt that they were in the loving arms of Jesus Christ.

Others, however, (and I put myself in this group) have a tough time identifying a specific date in their lives that changed everything. For them (us) salvation has been a long process with a number of road signs along the way that point out events that changed our lives and pointed us toward the loving Father. This doesn't make our salvation any less real than those who had a day full of fireworks and bright lights.

The Apostle Paul tells us to put on our helmet of salvation. That's the covering of our head. It protects our thoughts and our minds. Regardless of how you would mark your salvation, put on your hat and tell about it. Others will want to know.



WHAT IS YOUR STORY OF SALVATION? WHEN WERE YOU SAVED? WAS IT ALL AT ONCE OR HAS IT BEEN A SERIES OF ROAD SIGNS POINTING YOU TOWARD GOD? IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO PRACTICE RETELLING YOUR STORY.



Not only is the helmet of salvation important in our lives, so is the sword we take in our hands. Yesterday we talked about the shield which we hold in our hands to fight off the fiery arrows that the devil is shooting at us. Today, we talk about taking something else in our other hand: the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This is the only weapon that Paul talks about as he tells us to get ready for spiritual battle. Everything else is for protection. They are things that are on the defensive. If we are strong in them, we will be safe. The sword, however, is for attacking.

In the letter to the Hebrews, the author wrote about the strength of the Word of God, saying it is "sharper than any double-edged sword," and that "it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4.12 NIV). The only weapon we need if we are to experience victory in the spiritual battles going on around us is the word of God, the Bible.

But a sword hanging above the fireplace in our living rooms is not going to do us much good. A sword on display in a museum is just going to gather dust. By the same token, a Bible sitting on the table and not touched is going to gather dust as well. A Bible sitting on the bookshelf is really nothing more than black words on a white page. They don't mean a whole lot. They don't have any power. The power that comes from the Sword of the Spirit is power that comes when you and I take the sword in our hands, open the Bible, read it, and put it to practice in our lives.

As people who claim a belief in Jesus Christ, we need to know who this Jesus Christ is. As people who are willing to leave the comforts of home to share the love of God with strangers in a strange land, we need to know who this God is. As people who call upon the power of the Holy Spirit to fill our lives, we need to know (say it with me now) who this Holy Spirit is. If we don't open the Bible

for a few weeks, few months or even a few years, we will not know. It's that simple.

Every day of our lives we make the effort to wake up, get cleaned up, get dressed, and get busy with the things that we "have to get done today." It's amazing how often we find the time and energy to do those things, but often cannot take the time to polish the sword of the Spirit as we read from the greatest love story ever told...the one in which Jesus came to be one of us so that we could become one family with the Father.

 HOW IS YOUR TIME WITH THE LORD? HAVE YOU BEEN READING YOUR BIBLE? DO YOU READ IT EVERY DAY? WHETHER YOU HAVE A HABIT OF READING THE BIBLE OR NOT, MAKE A PROMISE TO YOUR TEAMMATES AND  TO GOD THAT YOU WILL READ IT RELIGIOUSLY (YES, I'M AWARE OF THE IRONY IN THAT PHRASE) EVERY DAY UNTIL AT LEAST THE WEEK AFTER YOU GET BACK FROM PERÚ.

Now that you've made that promise, I need to tell you something else. Just reading the Bible is not enough. Reading it like a novel is a start, but usually a novel doesn't get to be a part of who we are in our day to day lives (yes, sometimes that happens, but stick with me here). The Bible is like any other book in the world. It is words on a page. It's stories that make a person laugh sometimes and cry at other times. But it is also more than that. For those of us who believe it to be the Word of God, it carries power to change and transform lives. Since that is the case, we need to read it differently than we'd read the latest best sellers. Let me offer a suggestion to help you get started (if you already have a regular habit of reading the Bible, keep it up. This is just a suggestion. Do what works best for you.)

First, find a place that you can be alone with God. This doesn't necessarily mean you have to physically be apart from everyone else (although it might). It helps me to focus on God if I am sitting in what I feel is a "holy place." Sometimes it takes me a long time to find it. Other times not. When we lived in the United States, there was bench underneath a dogwood tree in our yard. That was my spot for being alone with God. Sometimes my wife joined me there. Sometimes the kids or the pets. Regardless of who was with me, I knew I could be there with God.

Second, before you start reading, pray. Ask God to open up the Word in new and exciting ways for you. Ask to see how the words you read have meaning for the life you live. I'm not going to say that every day you are going to

have a new, wonderful revelation that will transform your life. Many times it is a word or two or a phrase that tickles your mind and wiggles their way into your behavior without you even realizing it.

Third, read the Bible. It doesn't have to be a lot. Just enough. I can't say how much *enough* is. Really it depends on the day and what's going on in your life. By this I don't mean if you are too busy to read more. Life can wait. What I mean is let the word of God guide your time. You might start reading and the first verse jumps out at you and you can't go on without thinking about those words. If that happens—do you know what?—you've perhaps read enough. Other times you might read chapters and chapters and when you try to put the Bible down, there is something that tells you to pick it up again. Allow it to happen.

Fourth, take some time during the day to think about what you read. Meditate on it. Mull it over. Toss it back and forth in your mind. Maybe try to put yourself in the story. If you are reading one of the letters or prophecies, try to imagine it was written directly to you in the situation in which you are living. This might be hard, but if you are wearing the shoes of peace, you don't have to worry. You'll be able to handle it.

Finally, pray again. Thank God for the words you've read and ask that the meanings and the actions of those words may be put into practice in your life. We'll talk more about prayer tomorrow.



THE FOLLOWING IS ONE WAY THAT YOU CAN GET STARTED READING THE BIBLE AGAIN. IF YOU STAY ON SCHEDULE, YOU'LL READ THROUGH ONE OF THE STORIES OF JESUS CHRIST (MARK), THE STORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH



AND SOME MISSIONARY JOURNEYS (ACTS) AND A LETTER FILLED WITH JOY REGARDLESS THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AUTHOR (PHILIPPIANS). IF YOU DON'T STAY ON SCHEDULE, DON'T WORRY. WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT EVERY DAY YOU SPEND TIME WITH THE LORD IN POLISHING THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 25 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 22 | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippians 2 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippians 4 |



DÍA CINCO:

Keep talking to the Lord

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

-- Ephesians 6.19 (NIV)

Over the past few days we have been talking about the importance of getting our spiritual lives together so that we can be ready to come to Peru. We've talked about spiritual battles going on around us, as well as ways to defeat the enemy through our devotional times and telling our stories of faith. Yesterday we even set up a daily bible reading schedule for those of us who have not been very faithful in this area of our lives (that's not a criticism, just a statement of fact). Today, however, we look at what may very well be the most important part of getting ready to come to Perú: Prayer. If we are not praying, we are not talking to God; and if we are not talking to God, we more than likely are not listening for God to be speaking back to us; and if we aren't listening for God to be speaking to us, we are not going to be ready to come to Perú.

Prayer is vitally important not only when you get to Peru, but also as you prepare to come. Why? Because if God wants you here to serve the Kingdom of God, the enemy of God does not. The spiritual battles will begin even now. Let me tell you a story.

Rob and Linda loved God and wanted to show their love by going on a mission trip to Perú. They had the skills they needed to make a difference. Rob

was a carpenter, and Linda was a school teacher. They loved children and had three of their own. Bryan was 15 and coming to Perú with them. Lisa was 19 and off at college (she wanted to come, but could not get out of classes. “Maybe next time,” she said.) And then there was Jim. Jim was 21 and a legal adult now, and he was doing everything he could to enjoy his new found freedom. He knew his parents were coming to Perú, but to be honest, he didn’t really like the idea. He liked having them around in case he needed them. And he needed them a lot. He’d wrecked his car twice in the past two years and had to call them to come pick him up from the side of the road somewhere. Six months before he lost his job because he simply didn’t want to show up for work. He whined to his parents about the unfairness of it all, but they told him it was his own fault and that “if he wanted to be treated like an adult, he’d better start acting like one.” Two weeks later they had to bail him out of jail for driving under the influence of alcohol. He made a lame excuse and promised not to do it again. So far he hadn’t, but about a month before the team was to board the plane for Lima, Jim was given a warning by a police officer for unruly behavior at a local night club. The officer had brought him home to the custody of his parents (not the normal thing for an officer to do since Jim was a legal adult already).

The next morning, while Jim held his pounding, hung over head, Rob and Linda told him, “We love you, Jim, and so we’ve got to do this: The next time you get in trouble with the law, wreck your car, or get thrown in jail... you are on your own. We aren’t going to go bail you out. You’ve got to learn from your mistakes.”

Jim seemed to hear this, and since that time he’d been clean. He went to work on time. He didn’t come home drunk or high. He was doing much better. That is, he was doing better until the night before Rob and Linda were going to leave. At 11:35 that night, the phone rang. Linda’s heart sank, and Rob felt sick to his stomach. “Oh, no,” they both said together.

Rob picked up the phone. “Hello,” he said. “Yeah... no... no... We told you, Rob... Yes, we do love you... I know you don’t understand, but... Yeah, it’s because we love you that we aren’t going to bail you out. You’re on your own... Our plane leaves at 8.35... Yes, we are still going... We will talk when we get

back in two weeks... You'll be okay... And, Jim?... Remember, we love you and we are praying for you..."

That was the last time they talked to Jim until they got back. It wasn't easy for them. They didn't want to leave their oldest son in jail, but they had prayed about what to do with their son and believed with all their hearts (broken as they were) that they were doing the right thing.

God wanted Jim and Linda and Bryan in Peru. Some things happened on the trip that only they were able to handle. Lives were changed. They could see it happening in front of them. They could only pray that Jim's life was changing, too. God had a plan for all of them. When the enemy saw he could not turn them away from God's plan, he attacked someone very close to their hearts.



IF YOU WERE IN THE POSITION OF JIM, LINDA, OR BRYAN, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE? DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN SPIRITUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY PREPARED TO LEAVE JIM IN JAIL? IN THE MARGIN,



WRITE A FEW OF YOUR FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS.

In the first part of the verses we are looking at today, Paul writes, "*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*" We are, he says, to pray on *all* occasions. Not just when we feel like it. Not just when the pastor tells us to bow our heads and close our eyes. Not just before we eat a meal. We need to be praying all the time, no matter what is happening around us. Jim, Linda and Bryan were happy they'd been talking to Jesus.

Paul continues his thought by saying we are to take to the Lord *all kinds of prayers and requests*. This means that we don't need to be concerned about boring God or about our fears, concerns, joys or whatever are "too small a thing." It's perhaps a bit ironic, but God is too big to have anything too small to worry about. You are going to Perú to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. Yes, someone else could do it, but for whatever reason, God chose you.



AS YOU PREPARE TO COME TO PERÚ, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE "SMALL THINGS" THAT YOU NEED TO BE TALKING TO GOD ABOUT? WHAT IS HEAVY ON YOUR HEART? IS THERE ANYTHING WORRYING YOU? ARE YOU PRAYING



FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO ARE STAYING "BACK HOME"?

It might sound canned or that we are blowing things out of proportion, but this is something that every missionary needs to take seriously. If you are working with God to expand the borders of the Kingdom of God, you need to be ready for some push back from the enemy of God. Missionaries on short term trips have had loved ones die, fall and break bones, or be in car accidents right before they left. Some have lost jobs or have had their homes catch fire. Sometimes the attacks are more subtle (but no less painful) as friends tell missionaries they are crazy or not really doing what God wants them to do. Family members have opposed the idea of leaving the comforts of the United States. Being a missionary is not about taking a vacation to an exotic location. It is about being used by God to do God's work. Being a missionary is something that we need to take seriously. It is hard work, but worth the effort.



AS YOU PREPARE FOR THIS TRIP, GET COVERED BY PRAYER. AND DON'T BE THE ONLY ONE PRAYING. GET OTHERS TO BE PRAYING FOR YOU. PAUL FINISHED HIS THOUGHTS BY SAYING, "PRAY ALSO FOR ME..."



IN THE SPACE BELOW, LIST FIVE PEOPLE YOU WILL ASK TO PRAY FOR YOU EVERY DAY FOR THE ENTIRE TIME YOU ARE GETTING READY TO COME TO PERU, THE TIME YOU ARE HERE, AND FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS AFTER YOU GET BACK.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.



IT IS NOT ENOUGH JUST TO ASK THEM TO PRAY FOR YOU. YOU ALSO NEED TO BE IN CONTACT WITH THEM ABOUT HOW TO BE PRAYING FOR YOU. HOW WILL YOU LET THEM KNOW WHAT YOUR NEEDS ARE?



OKAY, LAST THING: PRAY FOR US, TOO. WE ARE ON THE FIELD RIGHT NOW AND GETTING READY FOR YOU TO JOIN US. WE NEED YOUR PRAYERS BECAUSE IT IS NOT EASY (IT'S A GREAT LIFE, BUT NOT ALWAYS EASY).



PLEASE REMEMBER TO BE IN PRAYER FOR US.



A few facts about:

History and Geography

- 🐾 The Plaza de Acho is the second oldest bull ring made in the world. It was built in the days of viceroy Amat in 1766.
- 🐾 The National University of San Marcos is the oldest in the Americas and was founded on the 12th of May of 1551.
- 🐾 The oldest newspaper in South America is *El Peruano*, founded by Simon Bolivar in Lima in 1825
- 🐾 One of the highest train passes in the world is in Ticlio at 4818 meters above sea level (15793 feet). This passenger train departs from Lima once a week.
- 🐾 The deepest canyons in the world are Cotahuasi with 3600 meters (11,810 ft) and Colca with 3400 meters (11,150 ft). Both are in Arequipa, the second most important city in Peru. The Colorado Grand Canyon is only 1600 meters in depth (1 mile).
- 🐾 The highest dune in the world is Cerro Blanco, 1176 m (3858 ft) from the base, near Nazca, in the coastal Peru. Height from sea level is 2080 m (6791 ft)
- 🐾 The Andes mountains in Perú have :
 - 🐾 50 peaks over 6000 meters (19,685 ft)
 - 🐾 1769 Glaciers
 - 🐾 12,000 lakes and lagoons of different lengths and depths