

The Gathering Community Group Guide

Brave // Week 8 // Take up arms

Paul Jenkins

June 7, 2015

Esther 9

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS WILL BE ON BREAK OVER THE SUMMER. OUR FALL QUARTER WILL BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER 2015.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

Have you ever noticed that it's one thing to be so far ahead in a game that winning is inevitable, and another thing entirely for the game to be over and to have won? That's a pretty good analogy of our faith, isn't it? We KNOW that we win, and yet, as long as we're living on this planet, there's still game left to be played against an enemy who hates to lose. As odd as it may sound (especially if we think being Christian means being passive), we've still got some fighting to do. What's important for us is to know why we fight and how we fight.

1. **There is a war raging:** All it takes is 30 minutes in front of the evening news and you can see it: we're not in heaven yet! We live in a world that feels very much like a war zone – even though Jesus 100% defeated our enemy at the cross. It can be so easy to feel so defeated that we never fight or to feel so overconfident about Jesus' victory that we never fight. But against an enemy who is ticked about losing, not fighting is not a smart choice. We just need to remember that we fight from victory, not for victory.
2. **What does it mean to fight FROM victory?** It means the difference between fighting to take and fighting to keep. Jesus' kingdom won at the cross (Colossians 2:15), and so we are fighting in order to keep what he's already won for us. Some people murder to take, but that's not the same as sometimes needing to kill to defend. That's what happened in Esther 9 physically, and what we'll need to be prepared to do spiritually. Knowing that we've already won allows us to fight courageously, unselfishly and with humility.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What, if any, is your takeaway from this week's message?
- As a result of this series, what would you say that Jesus is telling you? What will you do in response to what he's saying?
- How important is training if we're going to fight? According to 2 Timothy 3:16, what is one of the tools we have for being trained in righteousness? On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not very and 10 being exceptionally), how prepared do you feel for stepping into the fight? What would help you raise that number if you were asked the same question in a month?
- As your group heads into the summer break, take the time to plan some get-togethers over the summer months, to share some plans you may have, and take the time to pray for one another. Make sure you've got the information you need to stay in touch over the break. **Remember, we take a break from community groups, not from community.**