



TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Articles

Aware of Our Surroundings

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In his eyewitness account of events in the European theater of World War II, General Omar Bradley told how, as they crossed the Rhine and entered Germany in the closing days of the conflict, the Allies had so thoroughly demolished the German army's defenses that senior German commanders often lost track of the front's location. One commander, coming upon a group of German soldiers sitting in a field, began to reprimand them for not taking the fight to the Allies. He was more than a little surprised when an American MP grabbed his shoulder and ordered him to fall in with the rest of the prisoners (*A Soldier's Story*, 518).

Unlike that commander, in the spiritual war in which we are engaged, we are on the winning side, no matter how dire our situation may appear. The devil is determined, but, since the Sunday after Calvary, he's waging a war long since decided (1 Cor 15:54-57). Still, he remains a threat, determined to capture as many as he can. So, we are wise to recall some realities that are brought to mind by General Bradley's story.

First, the stakes in the war we are in are greater than those involved in World War II or any war since. It's a war of thought systems (cf. 2 Cor 10:3-5) against those who carry out "the schemes of the devil," ultimately "the rulers ... authorities ... [and] cosmic powers over this present darkness ... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:11-12 ESV).

Second, the devil is relentless. Peter likened him to a roaring lion on the prowl for his next meal. He also said that we must be vigilant and actively resist him, even as we take comfort in knowing God cares for us (1 Pet 5:6-9).

Third, much of the time, the devil's preferred plan of battle is not a frontal assault. While rightly dismissing the caricature of the red-suited horned demon carrying a pitchfork, we can forget that he often doesn't appear as anything else so obviously sinister either. Instead, as the master of deception, he "disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14; cf. John 8:44).

So, we must always be aware of our surroundings, conscious of the potential danger. We should take the war seriously, prepare for his attacks, nurture righteousness, and never relax our preparation in God's word. (Eph 6:13-20). We must also trust God, cherish and pursue truth, and sink our spiritual roots deeply (Ps 1:1-6; Prov 23:23; Heb 5:11-14).

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