

## Isaiah 42:13 - The Promised Warrior! Ash Wednesday February 26, 2020

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Grace and peace from God our Father who has given us Jesus, the promised warrior! Amen.

Dear soldiers in Christ,

Our usual picture of Jesus is of a man who is loving, gentle, and caring. He welcomes little children; he accepts a despised tax collector and Peter, who had betrayed him. He is the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost and who carries a tired lamb in his arms. Who doesn't want that kind of Savior?

But most people in the world are not impressed with Jesus. They see him as a wimp who can't settle conflicts in the real world. They see hostility everywhere: between nations, races, political parties, and in families. Ours is a world at war. But, there's an even bigger on-going war which has affected billions of lives. That war included the most world-changing battle. At the center of it all is Jesus:

### The Promised Warrior

Let us stand and hear Isaiah 42:13: *"The Lord will set out like a hero. Like a warrior, he will work himself into a frenzy. He will shout. Yes, he will raise a war cry. He will be heroic against his enemies."* These are your words, heavenly Father. Save us from our enemies and give us the victory in Christ!

**The war clouds were looming for years.** God's people had long expected a warrior. Adam and Eve lost the first battle to Satan in Eden. The damage from the battle was that sin invaded our once-perfect world and with it came death and eternal judgment. What an ugly mess! Yet immediately after that loss, God promised to send one much stronger who would attack Satan and stop his hold on people. Listen to God's promise of violence: *"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel"* (Genesis 3:15). The conflict God predicted would be a bloody struggle between Satan and the Warrior who would come from Eve's family. The result would be that Satan would go down . . . violently in defeat!

But there would be a lot of preparing for the decisive battle: thousands of years before the promised saving Warrior would arrive. During that waiting time, the world's population grew and so did unbelief and evil. God kept giving people opportunities to stay strong and trust in the promised Savior. But time and time again, they ignored him and brought all kinds of trouble on themselves.

You know the reason. They had evil inside of them just like all of us. The Bible calls it sin. How bad is our sin? By nature we don't want Jesus to be our Warrior. Our old natures foolishly think that we can take on the devil by ourselves. We can't overcome him. No medicine can cure us of sin. A surgeon's knife can't cut it out. Radiation can't destroy it. Sin is an enemy of the worst kind, and it has relatives: the devil, a corrupt world, and death. Only a Warrior from outside our sinful world can stop it.

The Lenten season is an excellent time for us to think about the direction of our lives and our need to repent of our sins. Real enemies are lined up against us. These enemy forces surround and condemn us. And Christ's battle will determine our eternal destiny. St. Paul felt the power of sin in his life. He said, *"What a miserable wretch I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"* (Romans 7:24). Isaiah had good news for him and for us! *"The Lord will set out like a hero. Like a warrior... He will raise a war cry. He will be heroic against his enemies"* (v.13).

**Second, the champion Warrior is coming!** The hero will face the enemy. The wonderful book of Isaiah teaches us about this conqueror. God's Son would be virgin-born (Isaiah 7:14); and he would rule over the world (Isaiah 9:6). He is God's servant to bring justice to all the unrighteous of the world (Isaiah 42:1). His battle wounds would offer us healing (Isaiah 53:5). Isaiah didn't know when he would come. That was God's business. But he was certain of this: He would come! Seven hundred years of waiting went by. But God kept his promise: the victory was coming!

God's Son is a warrior! He is not a weakling who kneels before his enemies or cringes in fear. Rather, he is a powerful fighter who knows what battles are all about. Who do you think threw Satan and his army of angels out of heaven after he rebelled? When Joshua was preparing to fight the battle of Jericho, who was the man "*standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand*" (Joshua 5:13)? The Lord of armies of the Old Testament was the Christ! This warrior had years of experience in fighting and always won. This warrior was ready to act, in a frenzy for the last battle because he loved the people he created, and would stop the devil who held them captive!

Christ is so strong that he allowed others to take him captive, to beat him, to wound him, and even put him on a cross. He endured it all while knowing that he could at any moment stop the whole thing and blast them all away with his power. He told his disciples (Matthew 26:53), he could call on God's army of angels, to crush his enemies like ants. The Jewish leaders and Roman soldiers did not plan to kill him on that day. Jesus willed it because it was God's winning plan. He gave up his life to destroy his worst enemy.

There have been famous warriors in the past: King David vs Goliath, the Greek Spartans vs. the Persian army, and the US Navy Seals rescuing hostages. None of them can come close to this Warrior because none of them had what he had. He didn't need body armor or advanced weapons. He was human like us, but He also was holy and God. Not once during his life on this earth did he think, say, or do anything sinful. Even in battle, his only motive was love, pure love for people whether friend or foe. This is Jesus. And the good news is: "*He will shout. Yes, he will raise a war cry. He will be heroic against his enemies*" (v. 13).

**Third, our Warrior won!** Our promised warrior had a unique battle cry. In the Civil War, it was said that the southern soldiers had such a powerful battle cry that new union army recruits would run in fear before the first shot of a battle. But, Jesus silently entered the battle on a cross. Only at the end of his suffering did He cry: "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). He had a triumphant voice as our warrior brought victory for the world. Our faithful Lord has won. His victory means that our sin and guilt are forgiven. We share spoils of his victory. Isaiah describes: "*Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her. Her warfare really is over. Her guilt is fully paid for. Yes, she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins*" (40:2).

Let there be no doubt today (tonight) that Jesus Christ, the long-promised champion, came and won the war for our souls. It took great pain and even death. But, he has conquered Satan, death, and hell!

And because of his victory, the burden of our guilt has been taken away. Our step is lighter because our heavy load of guilt is gone. Maybe you are physically tired today (tonight) from a long day at work, or for taking care of the kids, or putting up with everyday hassles of life. But you have come here to receive refreshment from Jesus, who carried your heaviest load. You have received the promise of eternal life! Your hero won it for every human soul. By faith you can grasp the amazing victory.

So, let the thought of the Warrior, Jesus Christ, carry you through this Lenten season. Remember his victory through this verse by Martin Luther. "*Dear Christians, one and all rejoice, with exultation springing, and with united heart and voice and holy rapture singing, Proclaim the wonders God hath done, how His right arm the victory won; Right dearly it hath cost Him.*" Amen.