

Paraklēsis: Fight

The other evening, I found myself alone with the three kids (7b,11b,13g) and "nothing to do." Ana Sophia said (half jokingly) "Let's enjoy some quality family television." Yes, I laughed - that never happens, but, I thought, maybe there's a soccer game on... :^) Well, we ended up flipping around and, among a couple of other interesting things, we found a UFC match. Do you know what UFC stands for? Ultimate Fighting Championship. I learn something new every day. No, I don't live under a rock, but I do tend to shelter myself from these things. So, I was intrigued to see that this was not boxing... These men were something to behold - fit like I wanna be. Fit like some special g-sauce thing. Phit with phat pipes. Anyway, we watched a 4 minute fight and through the din of my daughter pleading to change back to "Project Runway," my boys were cheering and mimicking the moves of the fighters. They loved it and talked about it afterward, and even their goodnight hug to each other somewhat resembled a headlock.

The next day while driving, I was reflecting on this and the many, many scriptures that talk of "the mighty men of valor, able to wield a sword," and "the valiant men who went out to battle," etc. In "those" days, the enemy was evident and physical. The weapons were evident and physical. The risks were evident and physical. These days, things SEEM to be different - and they are in some respects. We are generally soft in our living and certainly not capable of wielding a (physical) sword. We are called to "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." Rom12 - and it tells us that also in Heb 12 and many other places. But we're not instructed to beat our swords into plowshares - yet. We are still at battle and need to be valiant men wielding a sword. We need to be trained and lean and adept and deft and shrewd and skillful and strong and healthy and courageous...etc. And both our sword and our enemy look different, too.

To those of us (myself included) who choose this cushy life of physical leisure and luxury and laziness, we need to commit to constant, hardcore spiritual training. Are you adept wielding the sword of the Lord? Are you arrayed for battle?

God put in us men this liking for violence. Ana Sophia wanted nothing of watching sweaty men trying to hurt each other, while the (3) generally peaceful and loving boys in the room were fully engaged. There is some sort of primal attraction to strength and power and skill and the ability to defend our loved ones against an enemy that I think drew us in to enjoying that fight the other night. I think that inherent tendency has not gone away with the new covenant for a reason. Sorry, I am being facetious here - by "the new covenant," I am sort of mocking the viewpoint of some that I have heard that says God used to be a god of anger and now He's a god of love... We know He doesn't change. We NEED this tendency toward aggression and the desire to fight and defend - not toward some angry dude in a chain link cage - nor toward some Muslim couple armed with the notion to kill innocent people. We need to correctly identify the enemy and direct our aggression toward the enemy and exercise our courage and valor and skill toward victory. Our enemy is the adversary. The adversary is Satan and, I think, also our fleshly desires, our old man... that old captain of the ship whom we have decided through our baptism, repentance and acceptance of Jesus as our savior, to bind up in chains. We are told to crucify him, to consider him dead. But, in my life, and likely yours, he seems to only be bound and not killed. Being bound, he still yells out orders that we sometimes continue to follow, but he is our enemy. Identify him and attack.

God, Himself, the creator of the universe said: "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go."

My love and blessings and a wish for a terrific day of rest to all of you. www.paraklesis.net