**RISE UP O MEN OF GOD**

Rise up, O men of God!
Have done with lesser things.
Give heart and mind and soul and strength
To serve the King of kings.

Rise up, O men of God!
The kingdom tarries long.
Bring in the day of brotherhood
And end the night of wrong.

Rise up, O men of God!
The church for you doth wait,
Her strength unequal to her task;
Rise up and make her great!

Lift high the cross of Christ!
Tread where His feet have trod.
As brothers of the Son of Man,
Rise up, O men of God!

William Merrill (1867-1954)

**RISE UP TO BATTLE**

William Merrill’s classic hymn stirs in Christian men the call to battle. The Lord’s church is in a war that is unlike any other in human history. There are forces called “*principalities and powers*” at work which transcend armies made of flesh and blood.

**Romans 8:38-39** “*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*.”

**Ephesians 6:10-13** “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*.”

**Colossians 2:14-15** “And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having *disarmed principalities and powers*, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

From these and other scriptures we can see Satan has an army of spiritual forces at work in this world. They are working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to destroy the work of God. While it so often seems that Satan and his heavenly forces are winning, we know that God’s church will gain the final victory. “… *on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*.” (Matthew 16:18).

**RISE UP TO LEADERSHIP**

Every army needs leaders. The greatest military forces, regardless of their superior weapons, are impotent without great leadership. The Axis Powers of Germany, Italy and Japan had tremendous advantages of weaponry (ships, planes, guns, bombs, etc), as well as far larger numbers of soldiers and sailors than the Allied Powers at the outbreak of WW2. That war should have been over in months from every angle you could see. But Winston Churchill’s leadership, and later Franklin Roosevelt’s, trumped Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito. Leadership matters.

Whether it is militaries, governments, corporations, schools, athletics, families or churches, leadership is absolutely crucial to success. Everything rises or falls on whether it is led by good or bad leaders. As John Maxwell is famous for saying, “Leadership is influence. No more, no less.” If you are influencing someone then you are a leader in that person’s life.

But since our discussion is focused on the Lord’s church, we are specifically asking the question, as sung in Merrill’s famous hymn:

“Who among us are rising up to become men of God, being done with lesser things,
to give their heart, mind, soul and strength to serve the King of kings?”

When Paul left Titus in Crete he had a specific reason for doing so. Listen to his words: “*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and* ***appoint elders in every city*** *as I commanded you*” (Titus 1:5).

Something was “lacking” in the local churches on that major island. What was lacking was leadership. Spiritual leadership. Without it these churches would never reach the full potential God had planned for them. They would “hold their own” and merely exist at best, or flounder and finally die at worst. Neither option would influence the world as God intended.

Acts 14:23 gives further insight into God’s plan for the local church as Paul is returning from his first preaching journey. “*So when they had* ***appointed elders in every church****, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed*.” To appoint elders in each local church, followed by commending them to the Lord, is a recipe for success. It is God’s divine plan. It will work. It always has.

Today, I’m simply asking every man who reads this to “rise up” and become men of God who will both lead, and fight, to bless the church where you attend. We need you. God can use you.

Rise up! - Rick