

I Am a Soldier at War (part 2)

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[0 : 00] I want to ask you to take your Bibles and turn to the book of Ephesians chapter 6 for our scripture reading this morning.! We're going to be reading in Ephesians chapter 6 beginning in verse 10 and we'll read 10 to 20.

So Ephesians chapter 6 verse 10. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore, put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm, then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with a readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

[1 : 08] In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains.

Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should. Last week, we saw that the day you became a Christian, you entered a war.

You stepped right onto a battlefield with a target pinned to your chest. Last, you became the hunted. And that's what makes the whole of your Christian life a spiritual warfare.

Satan and his other fallen angels, as we sang, though devils fill this world, and use the world and the flesh against you to get you to sin and to dishonor the God who has saved you.

[2 : 31] We saw four things about our enemy. He's supernatural, which simply means we humans are no match. For him. But he is no match for our almighty King Jesus either.

Secondly, he's invisible, a spirit not seen with physical eyes. Oh, but our Captain Jesus sees every move that he makes and every plan in his heart.

And he equips us with the sword of God's word that tells us of things unseen. Like demons. Thirdly, our enemy is deceitful.

And so he easily leads us astray with his lies. But our mighty Jesus arms us with the truth of Scripture to expose his lies. To show them to be what they are.

And then the fourth, our enemy is defeated. For our great Captain Jesus has triumphed over him by his life. Every temptation. Never once was Satan able to get him to sin.

- [3 : 31] By his death on the cross, he destroyed him who had the power of death. And by his resurrection from the dead. And so he now, our Lord now reigns.
- And he reigns until all of his enemies are put under his feet. And Satan himself and all who serve him are cast into the lake of fire. So we are more than conquerors then through him who loved us.
- And that means we fight this spiritual war from the high ground of assured victory in Christ. Now, Satan then and his fellow demons are the brains behind that trinity of evil.
- The world, the flesh, and the devil. He's the coordinator of the attacks upon Christ's kingdom. And so he remains largely hidden behind the scenes by making use of other instruments.
- Yes, there is out and out Satan worship and things such as that in which he is seen for what he is. But for the most part, he remains hidden. Hidden, he hides himself so well as if there was no devil.
- [4 : 35] And he hides behind this anti-God world system and culture. John 8, 44. Jesus calls the devil the father of lies.
- This world is full of lies. It's full of deceit. But if you trace it back to its father, it's the devil. Those lies, where did they come from? Who fathered them?
- It's the father of lies. You've been listening to the father of lies? He's the ultimate source. But he has all kinds of help spreading his lies, doesn't he?
- So there's that professor standing up in the university. And he's got a whole class full of students just waiting to hear what the smart intellectual people of this world believe.
- And he says, this world was not created by a personal God. But by impersonal forces of time and chance. And so Satan didn't have to whisper the lie into each one of those students' ears.
- [5 : 38] He had the professor do his dirty work for him. And some of those kids went home having exchanged the truth for a lie. The devil's lie. He's the father of them.
- World entertainers spread the devil's lies, calling on us to imagine there's no heaven. To imagine there's no hell. No religion.
- No God. And then to live like that. Even preachers are spreading Satan's lies to people by the churchfuls this morning. That there's no hell.
- There's no Satan. No resurrection from the dead of the Lord Jesus. No need for the blood of Jesus to satisfy the wrath of God against us for our sins. Pretty much everybody makes it to heaven.
- You know, there's a few bad people in the world today. But you just try your best and you'll make it. God's kind, you know. And it's Satan's lie. It's a damning lie.
- [6 : 37] But he didn't have to whisper it. He's got his preachers. Counterfeit. Apostles of light. And no wonder, since Satan himself is a counterfeit.
- And goes about as if he were a preacher of light. That was the problem in the Old Testament. There were always more false prophets than true prophets.
- And they were preaching peace, peace when there was no peace. And they were doing it in the name of the Lord. The Lord has told me to tell you that the Babylonians aren't coming.
- We're going to have peace for another generation. No, no, not at all. As the true prophets made clear. Now, there's something else I think we need to be aware of.
- And it's here in Ephesians chapter 6. I want you to consider the broader context of this section on spiritual warfare. Verses 6 to 18. Verses 10 through 18 of chapter 6.

- [7 : 39] The broader context to this call to spiritual war. This call to war is attached to a larger section that's dealing with relationships.
- It begins back in chapter 5 and verse 22. Where you see wives and husbands. Chapter 6 and verse 1. Children and parents.
- Chapter 6 and verse 5. Slaves and masters. And that last section on that relationship of slave and masters runs right up to this call to spiritual warfare. There in verse 10.
- To be strong in the Lord and put on the armor of God. To remember the devil's schemes. And to remember that our struggle is not merely against flesh and blood. But against spiritual forces of evil.
- I believe what the Holy Spirit is telling us here. Is that you will encounter Satan's temptation in your marriage. In that very precious relationship. The most intimate in this earth.
- [8 : 37] Between a husband and a wife. You will encounter Satan's temptations in the midst of your family issues. Of sons and daughters and parents.
- And you'll encounter it in the employer, master, employer relationship. Boss and employees relationship. These are battlefields where you will encounter your spiritual enemy.
- We saw last week, didn't we? That our family members can be tempters and temptresses to us. That Eve became the one who did the devil's work for him in tempting her husband.
- As did Job's wife. And as did Abraham in tempting Sarah to lie. And so forth. So our relationships are all flawed, aren't they?
- The best marriage is a marriage of two sinners. And that means sometimes we will encounter the enemy in our arms. That one that is most precious to us on the earth.
- [9 : 41] And that's where we'll have our struggle. And we need to remember that the enemy is not just husband, wife, children, parents, employees and employers.
- But behind them is this. Your struggle is not flesh and blood. There's this evil kingdom that you are encountering there.
- So that's where you need to put on your armor. Don't miss the fact that he remains hidden on these battlefields. These battlefields in your relationships are the very places you need to put on the whole armor of God and be strong in the strength that God supplies.
- So that by way of introduction. I'm a soldier of Christ. This is my identity in the Lord. I'm a soldier of Christ always at war in this life. I'm to have a wartime mentality.
- And I sought to raise that realization last week. Now if this is my identity in Christ, it begs the question, am I living like it?
- [10 : 50] And that's where we're going this morning. Well, what would it look like to live as a soldier at war? Does my life bear the likeness of a soldier in the midst of battle?
- This whole series we've seen that our identity is to shape the way we think and live. So if I'm a sheep in Christ's fold, that's to shape the way I live. I'm to listen to my shepherd and to follow him wherever he leads.
- Well, how does my identity as a soldier shape my thoughts and my life? Well, that's what we want to look at this morning. I'll give you five things that it involves.
- Turn to 2 Timothy chapter 2 where we'll see the first two of these. 2 Timothy chapter 2 verses 3 and 4.
- Paul is writing to Timothy. And he says, 2 Timothy 2 verse 3, Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

[11 : 59] No one serving as a soldier gets involved or the word is entangled in civilian affairs. He wants to please his commanding officer, the one who enlisted him.

Now, a couple things are here. And the first lesson is that a good soldier of Christ Jesus will endure the hardships of war. They will endure the hardships of war.

There is a wartime mentality and a peacetime mentality, and they're not the same. You live differently when you're at war, don't you? Some of you will know that better than others, having lived through more wars.

But when on the battlefield, good soldiers don't expect to be served delicious meals three times a day. They don't expect to be able to sleep on a mattress where they can dial up their own firmness to their liking, or to control the temperature, the AC or the heat to have it just like they like it.

No, they don't expect the comforts and ease of civilian life. There are rigors and hardships and austere measures of war that every good soldier is disciplined to endure.

[13 : 16] That's part of the importance of their training, their boot camp. And it's no different in the spiritual war we're engaged in. Here we read, endure hardship with us.

We are. Now, you endure it with us as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. If you're a soldier of Christ Jesus, there's hardships to be endured. After all, we're at war.

Now, that collides with something, especially in the West. A life of ease is part of the American dream, isn't it? We work to retire to live a life of ease as long as we can, as soon as we can get out of work, and to get into a life of ease.

That's the goal. And the church is not completely immune to that. But that is not part of Christ's plan for his soldiers. Not in this life. It's a battlefield, brother, not a recreation room.

It's a fight and not a game, the song says. And we're here to be fighting the good fight of faith to the very end of our lives. Heaven is the place of rest for soldiers. We just sang it, didn't we?

[14 : 27] It's coming. And that's to help you endure hardship now. But don't expect the rest of heaven to be your life here. No, expect hardship.

Neil Postman has recognized that we're a culture amusing ourselves to death. And sadly, many professing Christians also think life should be all fun and games and entertainment.

But it's at this very point that soldiers of Christ must march out of step with the culture. We're to endure hardship as good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

John Stott speaks of World War II. He was from England. And he said people during the war often said to each other, Well, there's a war going on.

Whenever they would want to explain why the austerity measures, why we're having to do without this and that, well, there's a war going on, you see.

[15 : 27] You live differently. You endure hardship when you're at war. So beware of the spirit of the age that makes you forget that you're at war.

It's all around us. It's pumped into us, the social media. And there's a traitor within that likes ease. Soldier is being assigned to his post by the commanding officer.

Here's your assignment for the week. Oh, but they're having bingo that night down at the library and I really wanted to go. Or I had a ball game I was hoping to watch on TV.

No, you don't hear that in the army, do you? Not at all. That's maybe okay for civilians, but not soldiers in active combat. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs.

So what are you saying, Pastor? I can't play games. I can't enjoy a vacation of ease. I can't have some fun.

[16 : 31] No, not at all. But I ask you, is it not possible for soldiers of Christ to become so entangled in the fun and games mentality, the ease and the activities of the world?

That we no longer act as if we're soldiers in a battle. And the war effort of King Jesus gets the backseat of our time, our money, our commitments.

It gets the leftovers of our schedule rather than the first place that it deserves. We are in a war after all. And so we expect certain hardships.

Beware soldiers of entanglements in innocent things that are no longer innocent when they sideline you from the war and from fighting Christ's battles. Well, that's the first mark of a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

They endure the hardships of war. Secondly, they please their commanding officer. The one who enlisted them, that would be the Lord Jesus. You see that in verse 4.

[17 : 44] He wants to please his commanding officer. Now, there's a very clear chain of command in the military, isn't there? Always has been. Listen to what a centurion said 2,000 years ago.

He's a man in the military. He's got 100 men under him. And you remember he came to Jesus to have him heal his servant who was paralyzed and suffering back at home.

And Jesus says, well, I'll go and heal him. And the centurion replied, Lord, I don't deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority with soldiers under me.

He had 100 of them. And I tell this one go and he goes and that one come and he comes. And I say to my servant, do this and he does it. You see the chain of authority in the military 2,000 years ago.

There in Palestine. It's no less essential in the army of Christ, is it? When our commander in chief says go, we go.

[18 : 53] When he says come, we come. When he says do this, we do it. When he says don't do that, we don't do it. Even when it means saying no to ourselves, that's part of the hardship of being a soldier of Jesus is to say no to yourself.

And yes to your commander. Even when it means saying no to what I want to do. And it means denying myself. Even when it means doing hard things, difficult things, distasteful things to my flesh.

And the enemy will do all that he can to get the soldiers of Christ to disobey their commanding officer. What does it do? It creates chaos in the army.

Destruction. An army can't work when the chain of command is broken. Now this must be settled right up front in the heart of every soldier of Christ.

I will serve the will of my commanding officer. If that's not your will, don't sign up to be a soldier of Christ. But though we must face that right up front, we also have to face it every day, don't we?

[20 : 03] Because it's the same issue that keeps pounding at us. Whose will will I do today? In this situation, this calling for faithfulness, calling for me to stand my ground and not to capitulate and compromise with the world.

Who will be obeyed now? Well, I said I would follow the commander. But you see, that one-time commitment at the beginning needs to be reinforced every day, doesn't it?

With our, your will, not mine. As our Lord taught us. Our daily aim. We make it our goal to please Him. So we find out what pleases the Lord.

And that's right here where we find out what pleases the Lord. And then we make it our daily aim to please Him. Because we'll all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

That's how Paul follows it up. We make it our aim to please Him. Because we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And there it will be asked, what did you do? Did you follow the commander's orders?

[21 : 03] Did you please the Lord? Or did you please yourself? So we go into battle every day over this issue. Who will I please today? Myself?

The devil? The world? The flesh? Or my commanding officer? A good soldier of Christ. Once to please his commanding officer.

The next two. Those two were found in 2 Timothy chapter 2. Verses 3 and 4.

The next two are found in Matthew 26, 41. You could turn there if you'd like. Our Lord was locked in a battle with the devil all through his life and ministry.

But it just kept getting more intense the closer he got to Calvary. And now he's in Gethsemane. And he's locked in a hand-in-hand combat with the evil one.

[22 : 02] And so what does he do? Well, he prays. And he prays again. And he prays again. And he also knew that his disciples were in for a battle that night.

And so he called them to watch and pray. And that's our text. Matthew 26, 41. Watch and pray, lest you fall into temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

So the third mark of a good soldier of Jesus Christ is that he will watch against the devil's schemes and temptations. He will watch against the devil's schemes and temptations.

Kids, if you were walking through a forest at night, I don't mean anyone here. I mean down in the rainforest of Africa.

And you knew that a lion was on the prowl and was hungry. Would it affect the way you made your way through the forest? That's the life you're living in, Peter would remind us.

[23 : 05] He didn't always. He wasn't always aware of the enemy roaring like a lion, but. He learned. And so now he's telling us as he's got scars on his face from having had a round with the lion.

Be self-controlled and alert. First, Peter three, five, eight. Your enemy, the devil prowls around seeking whom he may devour. Well, that's that's one metaphor.

The lion in the wilderness. Hungry, seeking whom it may devour. But. But this is a military identity we're talking about. So here the soldier on the battlefield is on guard for the night.

And he's keeping watch. He knows that out there in the darkness are enemies that want me dead and my friends dead.

So he's alert. He's watching. He's listening to catch any movement of the enemy and to sound the warning.

[24 : 13] Soldiers of Christ. We're to watch. We're to keep watch. What are we looking for? She leave your house in the morning or you go about your your house.

Detail there in the home as a as a mother, wherever your day takes you. What what are you watching out for? Well, the enemy. And his schemes and his temptations.

We see it here in Ephesians six and verse 11, our text that we've been reading. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against what? The devil schemes. I wonder if you know that your enemy has been spying on you.

Your enemy has been following you around. Closely observing your life. And based on that knowledge of human nature, but also of you and your circumstances, the enemy has developed particular schemes, particular methods, plans, plots.

To bring you down into sin. Demons are thinking creatures. And they have thoughts. And they've thought out a tailor made temptation most likely to succeed against you.

[25 : 36] And Paul tells us not only does the enemy have such schemes, but we need to be aware of them. You know, you remember that text in Second Corinthians as he writes to the Corinthian church? He says in chapter two and eleven in order that Satan might not outwit us for we are not unaware of his schemes.

I wonder if Paul could say that about this congregation. We're not unaware of his schemes. Or he would be outwitting us if we are unaware.

We're not unaware of his methods, his designs, his plans. So part of the watching of the soldier is to be aware of his schemes against you.

Now, we learn a whole lot about his strategies just by reading the Bible. So if you're reading your Bible regularly. You are learning Satan's schemes. I mean, if you just start at the beginning, right?

You get to chapter three and you see how the enemy is dealing with Eve. He's still dealing with men and women, boys and girls in the same way that he dealt with Eve.

[26 : 43] You read on a little further and you see how he's dealing with Abraham and how he's dealing with Noah and Lot. David, you're learning about Satan's schemes and his strategies.

So good for you. Keep reading. And as you're reading, look for his strategies and his schemes and set a watch for yourself in those areas. The Bible exposes Satan's schemes.

No small part of his advantage is to catch us unawares. But if the Bible puts us on notice, then that surprise element is taken away. But we can go even further from just reading our Bibles.

This is our counterintelligence. We can go even further. We can ask. I can ask myself. If I were Satan, how would I tempt John Heaney?

Let me give you that assignment. Not how would the devil tempt John Heaney. How he would tempt you, every one of you. Take that assignment to yourself. If I were the devil, how would I tempt me?

[27 : 54] Well, then I need to start to think about my life a bit. My age. My occupation. My gender. My marital status. My finances. My health. My family. My family. I need to look at the whole situation. My situation.

And then ask. What are the peculiar temptations of those categories that I find myself in? Old age. Yes, old age for me. A minister. A man.

A single man. And so on and so forth. And through the Bible. And through observation. Living in the world without my head being in the sand.

I ask. Well, how has he ensnared others in my categories? Because I don't want Satan outwitting me. I need to know where to place that special watch in my life against those temptations and schemes.

[28 : 55] Now, pornography is destroying men and ministers. And the statistics are horrible. So I would be a fool if I did not set a special watch upon my eyes.

And cut out of my life anything that even pulls me that direction. As Jesus says, it's better to go into heaven with one eye missing than to go into hell with two of them.

So if your eye is bothering you, cut out that situation that has your eyes looking at what you shouldn't look at. That has you looking even at things that want to lure you in deeper.

Because that's where Satan will come and attack you. It's not a secret. You can look at the statistics. Well, again, so that helps me.

It helps me know where I must set up a watch and cut off all known occasions of temptation and sin. So I need to think about my life and where I am.

[30 : 05] And then I need to examine my track record of sin. What temptations of Satan have proved successful in the past to get me to sin? In what areas?

What specific sins? And where and when has the enemy found me weakest and vulnerable and unwatchful and unprotected? How did I get into that mess? That's what I need to think about.

And there to set a watch. I don't wait to set a watch before I turn the last page of temptation. No, I need to set the watch back here. The first rising of temptation.

So I need to know where was that last time? When I went down before the enemy. What was going on in my life back then?

What was I thinking? What was I doing? What was I not doing? And there we set our watch. Could you identify three areas of temptation in your life?

[31 : 07] And draw up a plan of what you're doing to watch and to pray against it? Where you need to cut off right hands. Things is. You say, but I enjoy this. It's an innocent thing.

Yes. But if it's causing you to stumble and fall, you need to cut it off. That's what Jesus is saying. That's part of the hardness that soldiers of Christ. Endure.

And then what positive steps do we need to overcome evil with good? What virtues do we need to put on instead of those vices? So.

I'm still under this point of watching against Satan's devices. And. I want to say something about trials. You need to look at your trials in your life. Did you know that every trial in your life is also a temptation?

It's the same word in the Greek. Sometimes translated trial. Other times translated temptation. But I do believe that James. The God. The letter of James.

[32 : 05] Sets forth the teaching that. That every trial in your life from God. Has an underside to it. That the devil has his agenda. And what he wants. That trial to do.

We see it in Job. Don't we? So Job has. Everything taken from him. Well what's. What's the agenda? Well there's two agendas. There's the devil's agenda.

He's wanting Job to curse God. And there's God's agenda. He's wanting the devil to see that. Job serves him. For love.

And not just. For the good things that God gives him. God has his agenda. In your trial. He's wanting to strengthen your faith. He's wanting to prove your faith.

And show you that it's genuine. He's wanting to strengthen your faith. And build perseverance. He's got an agenda for you. He's wanting to glorify himself. By you going through this trial.

[33 : 06] But don't ever think that the devil doesn't have his agenda with your trial. He wants you to think bitter thoughts against God. He doesn't love. He doesn't do me good. Hard thoughts against God.

Unbelieving thoughts. All sorts of things. The devil wants. To take you away from Christ. Rather than drive you closer. God wants to draw you to him in trials. The devil wants to pull you away from him.

So. As you're setting a watch. Be sure you examine your trials. That's where the devil loves to do his work. And then. Lastly.

Under this point. Examine. Think about footholds. Think about footholds. Watch against giving the devil a foothold. Watch your anger.

That's one of the footholds. You read in Ephesians 4. 26 and 27. And do not let the sun go down while you're still angry. And do not give the devil a foothold. So.

[34 : 07] When we're sinfully angry. We're. And not dealing with it. We're giving the devil a foothold. In World War II. The battle for Normandy beaches. Was intense.

And costly. In terms of lives. But it was regarded as worth it. Because it gave us a foothold. In France. And from that foothold.

Even though it was just a small area of territory. From that little foothold. We were able then to launch further. Attacks. Upon the Nazis.

That would eventually figure into the victory. For the whole. Allied. Cause. Gaining that foothold.

In France. Was everything. And the devil seeks a foothold in your life. This is part of his strategy. It's just not hidden. We're being warned about it.

[35 : 01] Right here. In Ephesians. 4. 26. And 27. It's one of his many schemes. We're not to be ignorant of. Just a little sin.

Just a little compromise. Just a little unfaithfulness. Just a little distance. From you. And Christ. A little lie. No real harm. But from that little foothold.

He will gain a mile. That little inch. He'll gain a mile with you. He'll launch from that lie. And now you'll need to tell three more lies. To cover for that first little lie.

And so on. And so forth. Your anger. With your husband. That you went to bed with. And you slept with. You wake up with it. Only now it's more bitter anger.

Than it was yesterday. Because you've been nursing that. Rehearsing what he did. Don't let the sun go down. On your anger. Deal with it.

[35 : 56] Or else you're giving the devil a foothold. From which he can build greater distance. Between you and your husband. And greater malice.

And yes. Even hatred. So the devil's seeking a foothold. Watch there. Don't give him an inch. So a good soldier of Christ.

Will watch. But he'll also pray. And the two go together. No good watching and not praying. No good praying and not watching. Jesus says watch and pray. Now prayer is one of the pieces of armor.

Isn't it? In Ephesians 6. We're to be praying always. So that's. That's critical for the battle. For the soldier. Pray lest you fall into temptation.

Because though your spirit is willing. Your flesh is weak. Prayer is fighting the battle on your knees. Prayer is fighting with weapons. That are not of this world.

[37 : 01] That are mighty through God. To the pulling down of strongholds. You remember when Jesus was getting ready to leave the earth. And he's going to leave his disciples behind. In a world where Satan.

Is tempting. And so as he's praying. Father. Praying for these disciples. What's on his heart. He says.

Father protect them from the evil one. Jesus knows how fierce. The evil one is. And as he's leaving them. He knows. He's leaving them. And Satan will be attacking.

And his demons. So he says. Protect them. From the evil one. And. Interesting. When he teaches those disciples. How to pray. He says.

Pray like this. Do not lead us into temptation. But deliver us from the evil one. Jesus prays for that protection. We are to pray for that protection ourselves.

[38 : 00] I wonder. How often does that prayer make its way into your prayer life? I challenged you last week to pray it every day. Let's not walk away from that.

We don't walk away from the battle. The devil's not walking away from us. It's a fight to the finish. So let us be found often. Praying. Deliver us from the evil one. Remember.

We're no match for Satan. He will outwit us every time. If we're left to ourselves. He's smarter than us. He's more deceitful than. Than we are smart. And wise.

So we must have help from above. And prayer secures that help. So what do you need in your spiritual battle? Your fight with temptation. Your fight with sin. And whatever level.

And wherever you face it. What do you need? Well. It's. It's in Christ. He's full of grace for you. And you access that grace by prayer. And you come into his presence.

[39 : 00] And you ask it. And you receive mercy and grace to help you. In your time of need. And. Fighting temptation is a time of need. So. So prayer is calling in air power.

There we are. Pinned down by the enemy. Completely surrounded and outgunned by the enemy. In desperate need of help. And prayer. Is the soldiers walkie talkie. And we call in air power.

And it comes and pounds those fortresses. Of the enemy. And gives us relief. That we needed. That we might be able to stand. And having done all. To still be found standing.

In the evil day. You know. It's that walkie talkie. That calls in the air power. That often is the difference. Between standing and falling. In the Christian battle.

Peter didn't use it. Did he? Peter was told to watch and pray. But he didn't think he needed to watch and pray. Me? I'm not. I'm not going to deny you.

[40 : 00] I'm willing to die with you. Maybe these guys need to watch and pray. Not me. I don't even have a danger here. And they all said the same thing. And they all slept.

Instead of watched and pray. And they all fell. And forsook their Lord. They didn't sense their need. Did we in our own strength confide.

Our striving would be losing. We're not the right man on our side. The God of his own. We got to call in. This power of our Lord Jesus. Into the battlefield.

Into the temptation. Are you praying down Satan's kingdom. And praying up God's kingdom. If you're not praying against temptation. You're using a pea shooter. When a nuclear weapons are available.

To you. So let's pray. As those who are desperately. In need. Lord I will fall today. If you don't help me. Oh help me.

[40 : 59] Deliver me from the evil. Lastly for today. A good soldier of Christ. Will be vitally connected.

To a local church. A whole battalion. Of soldiers. The Ephesians 6 instructions. For spiritual warfare. Are not given to individuals.

Dear. Dear Michael. Dear James. Or. Dear Phoebe. No. Who's the letter sent to? To the saints.

The collective body. At Ephesus. To the group. Of believers. So we see that Jesus. Never intended for soldiers.

To fight this spiritual battle alone. Rather. His plan is to gather. Soldiers. Into companies. Of local churches. Battalions. Who are joined together.

[41 : 56] To learn. And train. And fight together. Now I. Find it interesting. That with the increase of technology. More and more jobs. Are able to be worked at home. You don't even need to.

To go. To work. You just. Sit in front of your computer. And do your job there. But not. The military. Not. Not the fighting men. In battle.

That. That's. What do we do? We gather. Our soldiers. Together. Don't we? And we want to build. Into them. That. Esprit de corps. They call it.

Which is French. For that group spirit. That camaraderie. That. Common bond. Of mutual support. And devotion. To one another. To make a tight band.

Of brothers. Who will fight. As a unit. Independence. Upon one another. Covering each other's back. And so. Fighting together. To win together. For the team.

[42 : 52] That esprit de corps. Is essential. In battle. It's the glue. That enables them. To fight as one. And win as one. And they don't build. Esprit de corps. In isolation.

With every soldier. Back at home. Going through calisthenics. No. They call them together. To a boot camp. And they. They put them through the rigors together. They. They live together.

Sleep together. Talk together. Run together. Suffer together. Fight together. They're preparing them. For the battle. And it is so important. That they have a tent.

Gather. Unified. Mentality. Now that's the very plan. Our captain. Jesus has designed. For every one of his soldiers.

To live shared lives. In the local church. No lone ranger. Fighting. Out there alone. But rather. Going through. Enemy territory. Which this world is. But going through.

[43 : 47] With a band of brothers. Watching over one another. Fighting together. Coming to one another's help. In this war. Praying with. And for each other.

Encouraging each other. To persevere. Through those hardships. That are. That we're facing. Right now. In this battle. And bringing each other. Fresh ammo. From the word of God. To use.

In the battle. Lightening their load. Carrying their pack. Their burden. With them. And for them. Our Lord knows. That it's not. Safe to fight.

Satan alone. When Israel. Was first coming. Out of Egypt. In that great. Exodus. Under Moses. The enemy.

Took advantage. The Amalekites. Took advantage. Of some. Deuteronomy. 25. 17. Remember. What the Amalekites. Did to you. Along the way. When you came out. Of Egypt. When you were weary.

[44 : 44] And worn out. They met you. On your journey. And cut off. All who were lagging. Behind. Now learn the lesson. For the spiritual warfare. It's stragglers.

Lagging. Behind. The army. Who are left. Exposed. And vulnerable. To the wrath. Of the enemy. And the devil.

Loves to attack. Those who are alone. Isolate. And attack. It's one of his strategies. Isolate. Just as you see. In the pack of animals. And there's the herd. Of deer. Antelope. And the.

The. The. The. The. The wild animal. Seeks to get one. Away from the pack. And then he devours it. That's the devil. There's safety in the pack.

Vulnerability. When alone. With none to help. So. Two are better than one. If one falls. Another can help him up. But pity the man. Who falls. And has no one.

[45 : 39] To help him up. So your brothers and sisters. Are here to help you. In the spiritual warfare. Is that. That's not difficult. To understand.

Is it. So don't remain aloof. From them. As if you don't need them. Such pride. Comes before a fall. We were never meant. To fight alone. But by joining arms.

With the company. Of the saints. In the shared life. Of other soldiers. Where the tightest. Esprit de corps. Can be found. In Jesus Christ. Who unites us. As one.

One body. If ever. There. There was. A man. That we. Would think. Could go it alone. At battle. Rambo style. It would be the apostle Paul.

Wouldn't it? Yeah. He. He. He could do that. He could fight without. Anybody. Helping him. But it's the apostle Paul.

- [46 : 33] Who's teaching us. That. We need the body. Who's. Who's sending. Instructions. For spiritual warfare. To the local church. At Ephesus. Teaching them. As a group.
- How to fight. And the last. Piece of armor. That he speaks of. Is. Is to pray. And to keep on. Praying. For all the saints. You see what he's saying.
- You're not just praying. Don't lead me. Into temptation. Deliver me. From evil one. No. It's. Deliver. Us. Do not lead us.
- Into temptation. And do not. And deliver us. From the. The evil one. Praying for. One another. For all the saints. You see. It's a together. Commitment.
- And how does he end that section. On the Christian. In complete armor. By saying to the Ephesian church. And pray for me.
- [47 : 29] There's no Rambo. Fighting on his own. This is. The apostle Paul. Knowing that. If I don't have the prayers. Of God's people. Calling in power. From above. I am toast. So pray for me.
- And he doesn't just say it to Ephesus. He says it to the other churches as well. He's begging. For prayer. That. He's engaging them. In. In his battle. So when he faces.
- That obnoxious crowd. Of Jews. That. That want him dead. He's got. Prayer warriors. Praying down. Help. From above. This week.
- A brother. Had an opportunity. Before him. To. Give a witness. For Christ. He knew it was coming. And so he shared the situation. With me. And he. Told me what he planned. To say. And he said. Pray for me.
- Pray for me. And I felt honored. He was bringing me in. He didn't want to be out there fighting. That battle. By himself. For Christ. He.
- [48 : 25] So I was able. To enter into. His battle. His fight. For our savior. That's our commander's plan. For his soldiers. The local church. Is his. Is chosen instrument.
- For carrying on this war. Until he comes. The local church. Is his recruiting agency. He sends you out. All week long. Into this world. To do what? To make disciples. To get new recruits.
- Right out of Satan's. Kingdom. To bring them to Christ. The local church. Is his recruiting agency. It's his boot camp. For the lifelong training. Of soldiers. Where they might be armed.
- With the truth of God's word. The full armor of God. And where they're taught. To obey everything. That our commander. Has commanded us. Matthew 28. It's through the local church.
- That he trains our hands. For war. The local church. His recruiting agency. His boot camp. And his field hospital. We don't shoot our.
- [49 : 21] Our wounded. But we welcome them. Back into the hospital. To see them healed. To see them restored.
- To see them strengthened. And return to the front lines. To fight another day. So Peter. You're going to fall. But I prayed for you. And when you are restored. Strengthen your brothers.
- Because they too. Are going to fall. And they're going to need. The one another. That's found in the body of Christ. They're going to need. This band of brothers ministry. For you to strengthen them.
- That's God's plan. Our commanders called us. To join together. In the war effort. So I must ask you soldiers. Are you lagging behind? Or are you intimately involved.
- With the local church? Are you here for the training sessions. That go on week by week. Training our hands for war. In this world. Are you here as we call down.

[50 : 24] Help from heaven. Have you asked anybody here. For help in your battle. With temptation and sin. Has anybody asked help from you.

Who are you helping. In their battles. Against the evil one. Are you making the most. Of your church commitments. Or drifting away from them.

Don't learn the hard way. That soldiers were never meant. To fight. It's alone. It's never safe. To lag behind. But avail yourself. Of all that Christ.

Has meant. The company of the saints. Is to be. As we fight this battle. Together. Next time. We'll look at. Some of the armor. That we are to put on.

Some of the weaponry. But lost friend. Until you. Come to Christ. In faith. And repentance. You are still. In Satan's camp. You're in his prison house.

[51 : 18] You're following. The. The father of lies. He's got you fooled. And. But Jesus Christ. Is recruiting. Soldiers today. Right out of Satan's camp.

And he's saying. Come to me. Don't care how long. You've been serving him. You come today. And I'll receive. I won't turn one away. What a captain. What a master to serve.

What benefits. He holds out. For those who serve him. The wages of sin. Death. Destruction.

Those are miserable wages. Why. Why would you ever. Stay another day. Receiving those kind of wages. When Jesus Christ. Offers you eternal life. As the free gift.

Come to him now. Let him set you free. From sin and Satan. And his miserable wages. Serve Christ. And the benefits that you reap. Lead to holiness. And the result.

[52 : 21] Is eternal life. For the wages of sin. Is death. But the gift of God. Is eternal life. Through Jesus Christ. Our Lord. Let's pray. Gracious father in heaven.

Make new soldiers. Of the cross today. Draw them. To our. Great liberator. Jesus Christ. Set their hearts. Free from sin. And Satan's lies.

And bring them. Into that glorious liberty. Of the children of God. Thank you for the privilege. Of. Knowing you. And.

Being a soldier. Of Jesus Christ. Help us to. Represent him. Well. It's all through the merits. Of Christ. That we are soldiers. And.

We pray you'd make us. Good and faithful soldiers. And. Increasingly. Helpful. To one another. In this fight. We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.