

# I Am a Soldier at War

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn there in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6. I'm going to be reading verses 10 through 18.

! 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 the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

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.

[ 1 : 27 ] With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Since there are some visitors with us today, just want to let you know we're in the midst of a series on the many identities that are ours in Christ.

We're just coming to the Bible and letting God tell us as believers who we are and what we are, that we might better live in the light of who we are in Christ.

So we might walk worthy and live lives in line with our calling. Today, we're going to see that every true follower of Christ is a soldier at war.

A soldier at war. We saw it in the passage of Ephesians 6 that was read to us. That's a call to war, isn't it? We're called to put on our armor, not just for a parade, but for a war, a real battle with real enemies.

And so that we might take our stand against the devil's schemes. And after the fighting's over and the dust is settled, that we might be found standing at last.

[ 2 : 40 ] Well, Paul speaks so often of this spiritual warfare in his letters. 2 Corinthians 10, he says, Though we live in the world, we do not wage war like the world does.

No, the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. He says, we are waging war.

We are fighting. When he writes to the Philippians, he calls Epaphroditus, my fellow soldier. And when he writes to Philemon, his friend, he refers to Archippus as our fellow soldier.

Yours and mine. We are soldiers and this is a fellow soldier. We're all soldiers. And when writing to Timothy, he says, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Down through the centuries, hymn writers have laid hold of this identity of the Christian. And in their hymns, they call us to be what we are, soldiers of Christ.

[ 3 : 47 ] Our own hymnal has a whole section. Fifteen hymns entitled The Christian Warfare. Drawn upon what they see in the scriptures.

So onward, Christian soldiers. Marching as to war. Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armor on. Am I a soldier of the cross?

A follower of the Lamb? Stand up. Stand up for Jesus, you soldiers of the cross. And many others. When our missionary to France, David Vaughn, was with us last, He reminded us of C.T. Studd, who scorned wealth and fame that was his to take the gospel of Christ to those who had never heard it.

Studd believed that the Christian is 50% soldier. That whatever else we are, we are soldiers. So if you are in Christ this morning, I wonder, is this part of your conscious identity?

[ 5 : 00 ] As you set out in the morning, do you remember, I am off to war today? Are you aware of the battle that is raging?

Are you aware of your enemy? Are you aware of his schemes? Are you aware of the armor of the help that is yours in Christ? My aim today and in the weeks to follow is to raise that awareness. So if you're in Christ by faith, would you say with me, I'm a soldier at war. I am a soldier at war. No conscientious objectors.

No draft dodgers. Every true Christian is a soldier at war. Now, it's a spiritual war.

It's not a war with bombs and bullets and tanks and guns. But a war of ideas, a war of thoughts, of lies and truth, of desires, of goals, of priorities, temptations, choices, sins, obeying and disobeying.

[ 6 : 14 ] It's a spiritual war. But just because it's spiritual, don't think for a moment that it's not real. And I think that's a problem. That because it's spiritual, we can somehow forget that it's real.

Or don't think that it's any less serious. It's not war games like some of you like to play. No, it's deadly serious business. It's real weapons, real enemies with real hatred, shooting to kill.

It's kill or be killed. It's a real war between two real kingdoms, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of Satan and his hellish host. And the stakes are real, as real as they are high. It's a battle for the eternal bodies and souls of men, women, boys and girls.

It's a battle for heaven or for hell. And you're in it. Now, how did it start and how did we get involved in it?

[ 7 : 27 ] Well, the Bible tells us that Satan was created as one of God's holy angels and a rather high ranking and honorable angel at that. But in something that we don't understand, that mystery of iniquity, he grew proud and discontented with his assigned God assigned position.

He wanted to be like the most high God. And so he rebelled against God and he led a host of other angels in rebellion against God. For which he and they were cast out of heaven and hurled down to earth.

And so the war that began in heaven then moved down to this earth. And in Genesis 3, we find Satan in the Garden of Eden, don't we? In the disguise of the serpent, who is more crafty than any other animal.

Carrying on his war against God, spreading his propaganda against the Lord and inciting rebellion, not now among angels in heaven, but now among men and women.

Men and women. Mankind made in the image of God. So he's out to deface God's image. Just like you see artwork that's defaced and there's something beautiful.

[ 8 : 53 ] And these vandals want to deface it. That's Satan. He's wanting to deface God's image. He hates God. And where he sees his image, he would deface it.

So he's out to deface God's image in man. To bring man into his service. And to eternal misery at last. For that's where he is destined.

And misery loves company. So by deceiving Eve. And through her tempting Adam into sinning against God, Satan has planted rebellion in the hearts of everyone born into the human race.

We're looking at the history of this war. How did it get started? Well, this is it. Rebellion is now part of fallen human nature. Passed down from our first fallen parents, Adam and Eve.

So that we come into this world as beautifully as we look in the arms of our mother. As slaves of the devil. That's hard to say in a day that likes to puff men up.

[ 9 : 55 ] But that's what Jesus said. Slaves of Satan. That's how we start. Enemies of God. And that's why without exception we all have sinned and disobeyed God.

It's because we had a sinful nature. That we all like sheep have gone astray. We've turned to our own way. Every one of us.

There's not been one of those nice looking little babies that has ever gone God's way. Other than Jesus Christ. God in the flesh. Every other one. Their own way.

That's part of sinful nature. Is rebellion against God. And so from birth we've all joined Satan in his conspiracy against God.

And the New Testament is crystal clear on this point. If you believe the Bible you have to believe that. Turn to Ephesians chapter 2. And I want you to see at least this text.

[ 10 : 53 ] And I'll read several others. But I want you to see this with your own eyes. Ephesians 2.1-3. And as I read.

I want you to notice the trinity of evil that is found in these three verses. The trinity of evil that is the Christian's enemy. And here under inspiration. Paul says to every saint in the church in Ephesus. Ephesus. As for you. You saints there. You believers in Christ. You were dead in your transgressions and sins. In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world. There's one of your enemies. And of the ruler of the kingdom of the air. The spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. There's another of your enemies. All of us also lived among them at one time.

Gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature. Our flesh. Following its desires and thoughts. Do you see the trinity of evil in these three verses? You've got the world.

[ 11 : 55 ] The flesh. And the devil. And together they comprise the Christian's threefold enemy. They work together as a coalition. Of evil.

And the devil is the intellectual head. He's the brains of the operation. The prince. Of darkness. So don't miss what Paul is saying. If you would understand the history.

And the nature of this war. Every one of us in our BC years. Our lives before Christ. Lived in sin and rebellion against God. As for you.

That's the way you lived. And instead of following God's ways and laws. We were following the ways of this world. That are contrary to God's laws.

And we were following the ways of our sinful nature. Its cravings and desires. And thoughts. But what we probably didn't know at the time.

[ 12 : 52 ] Is that we were also following the ways of the ruler. Of the kingdom of the air. There is a ruler. There is a potentate. There is a leader of this conspiracy of rebellion.

And who is that? The text says the spirit. Who is now at work. In those who are disobedient. That's the devil. That's the devil. We were walking in lockstep.

With the devil's desire and will. We were serving him instead of God. And the reason we didn't realize. That we were serving Satan's desires. Is because they were. Also our desires.

Weren't they? So we might say. Well I'm not following Satan's desire. I'm just doing my own thing. Precisely.

That's Satan's desire. To have you not doing God's thing. But your own thing. So even as you're pursuing your own thing. What are you doing? You're doing the will of the ruler. Satan.

[ 13 : 53 ] Of that kingdom of darkness. All unknowingly. But that's what marks the children of the devil. According to Jesus.

They want to do the will. Of their father the devil. John 8 44. Jesus says to his lost audience. You show that you belong to your father the devil.

Because you want to carry out his desires. He denies the truth. You want to deny the truth. He's a liar. You lie. He sins from the beginning.

You sin. And keep on sinning. And every Christian. Was once there. On Satan's side. Fighting against.

The God who made us. This universal nature. Of the rebellion. Is seen in several other key texts. I won't wait for you to turn them up.

[ 14 : 49 ] But you can jot them down. Revelation 12 9. The great dragon was hurled down. From heaven. That ancient serpent. Called the devil or Satan. Who leads the whole world astray.

The whole world. This is not just a few suckers. He leads the whole world astray. He's the pied piper. And the whole world. Is following him to hell.

That's the. Teaching of Revelation 12 9. First John 5 19. John says. We know that the whole world. Is under the control. Of the evil one.

It's not just a local squirmish. But a worldwide conspiracy. Of rebellion against God. Psalm 2 tells us that. That all the nations are in on this. Against the Lord.

And his anointed. And then. Second Corinthians 4. 3 and 4 says. Even if our gospel is veiled. It's veiled to those who are perishing. The God of this age.

[ 15 : 47 ] That's Satan. Has blinded the minds of unbelievers. So that they cannot see. The light of the gospel. Of the glory of Christ. Who is the image of God. He's blinded.

The minds of all unbelievers. So they can't see. They cannot perceive. The glory. That is our King Jesus's. And follow him.

And trust in him. In the gospel. So that's how we started. But then something. Happened. The moment you were born again. The moment you were converted.

To Jesus Christ. The moment you stopped. Following Satan. And you turned around. And you repudiated. That way. And now. You trusted in Jesus.

To save you from your sins. Something happened at that moment. You deserted. You deserted your old ways. And you deserted your old master. Satan.

[ 16 : 43 ] And you joined the ranks of King Jesus. And the kingdom of light. In fact. God has said. In Ephesians chapter 1. That he transplanted you. Out of the kingdom of darkness. Into the kingdom. Of his dear son. The kingdom of light. So there you were. Growing in that soil. One of them. And he transplanted you. Into the kingdom of light. No longer blind.

By Satan's blinders. But now. I once was blind. But now I see. I see things in here. I never saw before. I never saw. The God. That's revealed in Jesus.

Like I see him now. I never saw. That I'm that sinner. That the Bible talks about. I never saw. That I was the one. That needed to be saved. Now I see it. And now I trust him.

And now I know him. Because my eyes have been opened. I'm in the kingdom. In which the light of God. Is shining. Like the noonday sun. So you became a soldier.

[ 17 : 42 ] Of Jesus Christ. He's your new commander in chief. And the moment you did. Satan and his hellish crew. Declared war on you. You became the hunted. And that's why the whole of your Christian life.

Is a spiritual war. Sunday morning. Tuesday afternoon. Friday night. It's war.

Death alone dismisses you from the fighting. Only then. Do we get to rest. From this war. There was a young lady who was. A student at a Colombian university.

Up in the Andes mountains. And it so happened that a militant. Marxist organization. Had their headquarters in the same region. They posted the names of the Christian students.

On the bulletin board in the student union. And then they would check them off. One by one. After they had killed them. They were doing the works. Of their father the devil.

[ 18 : 43 ] He's a murderer. From the beginning. And this young lady. Had just been. Recently converted. But she kept quiet for two years. In that environment.

Until one day. She said to herself. If Christianity be true. Then it's worth living for. And it's worth dying for. And she no longer hid her.

Candle. Under. Under. A bushel. Am I a soldier of the cross? Must I be carried to the skies. On flowery beds of ease. While others. Fought to win the prize. And sailed through bloody seas. If you're a true Christian.

You're on Satan's hit list. And by following Christ. You have a target now. Painted on your back. And on your chest. You say.

[ 19 : 42 ] But I didn't ask for this war. No you didn't. But just by siding with Jesus. In this battle of the ages. You. Were thrown. Into the midst of the fray. You stepped on.

To the battlefield. That day. You forsook. Your old master. And. Identified. As a follower. Of the lamb. So you're a hated.

Deserter. Satan. We saw that in Pilgrim's Progress. Didn't we? When he faces. Apollyon. Satan's. He's hot after him. You've deserted me. Well Jesus always builds his kingdom.

On the rubble of Satan's fallen kingdom. He always gets his. His fighting men. From. From Satan's camp. And that's why the church. Always meets with the opposition. Of the gates of hell.

Always. Satan doesn't like to lose. His. Slaves. Serving him. And he's out.

[ 20 : 45 ] To make you pay. Not so much to kill you. Physically. Though we. We don't know. All that we are. Shielded from. But even more so. He's out. To make you stumble and fall.

And to disgrace. Your commander in chief. Oh he'd love to get you to deny Christ altogether. Even as he sought with Peter. To so sift him like wheat.

That he would. Walk away from Christ forever. He'd love to do that. He'd love to have you. Turn your back on Christ. And to come back to the world. And to his side. And.

To quit repenting. To quit believing. To quit obeying. To quit pursuing greater holiness. And likeness to Jesus. To quit witnessing. To quit seeking first God's kingdom. And righteousness. And to get you to start chasing after the world.

[ 21 : 42 ] Yes. Even those things that are good in and of themselves. But to. To pursue them instead of. Christ and his agenda for you. As a soldier. He'd love.

To have you bring shame on the name that you bear. He wants to rob you of your joy. Wants to steal your peace. Your assurance.

To make you a poor specimen of a Christian. A follower of Jesus. Look at him. Look at him. That's what Jesus makes his people. He'd love to make you that. Dishonor to Christ. Christ. So that's something of the history of this war. And how we got involved in it. We were thrown into it. Because. Christ has been fighting against this enemy.

Throughout human history. Remember. Jesus' words to those. Blessed are you when you are persecuted. And insulted. And slandered.

[ 22 : 41 ] Because of me. You're the one being persecuted. But it's because of me. That's how we got into this war. Because of Jesus.

Satan hates Jesus. You have that picture in Romans 12. Where. There's the woman. Pregnant. Ready to give birth. And there's the dragon. There's Satan. The devil. And he's ready to devour her son.

The moment it's born. And she gave birth to a son. Who would rule the whole world. And just as. The devil's ready to pounce upon that son.

He was snatched up to heaven. Where he couldn't reach him. So what does he do? He goes to make war. Against. The other. Children.

Of. The woman. Described as. As those who. Obey the commandments of Jesus. And hold. To the testimony.

[ 23 : 40 ] Of Jesus. It's Jesus followers. Can't reach. Jesus. Can't get his hands on Jesus. So he gets his hands on. His people. And that's why we're in this war. It's. It's because of Jesus.

Well. That's the history of this war. And how we got involved in it. Now. One of the fundamental. Let me just say. It's far better to be on Jesus side.

In the war. Than to be on Satan's side. And we'll see why. At the end. But. But one of the fundamental principles of war. Is to know your enemy. Isn't it? And to gain knowledge. Of the enemy.

Our military. Will spare no cost. Gathering all the information. They can. Inside information. About those who are out. To harm us. We have all the information.

We need to know about the enemy. In this book. Do you know God sees his every move. God sees what he's thinking about. He knows the temptation.

[ 24 : 36 ] He's going to bring to you. Later this afternoon. He sees it all. Satan's not. Somehow under the radar of God. And God gives us. Maybe not everything we want to know.

About our enemy. But he gives us. Everything we need to know. And that's one thing. That Christians need to. Curb is that. That interest in the. The demonic.

And go elsewhere. To find the knowledge about. No. It's here. This is all we need. We shouldn't be. Dabbling in. The demonic. To learn more. About it.

God knows him. Through and through. He reigns over him. He reigns over his every move. What has God told us. About our enemy. And when we refer to our enemy.

I'm going to refer to him. As this. As the devil. Or Satan. Even as the Bible does. Now. It's highly unlikely. It's not impossible. That. Satan himself.

[ 25 : 31 ] Has ever tempted you. Personally. But his demons have. And he's used the world. To tempt you. And he's used.

Your own flesh. To tempt you. But it may be. That you make it through life. Without having a personal encounter. With Satan himself. So when I refer to Satan.

And the devil. You know it in that sense. But. We'll see that he does. Tempt people. And he may. Personally. Have had a round or two. With you. But he has all these servants.

You see. To do his will. And when I speak of the devil. I'm speaking of his whole. Hellish crew. First thing. We need to learn about. Our enemy is. He's supernatural. Supra.

Natural. Above nature. So you and I. We're just natural beings. Flesh and blood. Human beings. Satan.

[ 26 : 26 ] And. His demons. Are fallen angels. They're angelic. Beings. They're spirits. They're. They're super. Human. They're above human beings.

In terms of. Super. Human. Powers. Acts. 19. Tells about. Seven sons of Sceva. Not followers of Jesus. But trying to cast demons. Out of people.

And they went into this one. Man's house. That had a. Dean was possessed by a demon. And these seven. Tried to cast it out. And that one demon. Was so powerful. That he landed upon.

These seven men. And gave him such a beating. That they ran out. Naked and bleeding. Super. These spirits. They were no match.

For one demon. But it's not just supernatural. Physical force. And I think. We need to. Be careful of that. We don't see. The.

[ 27 : 23 ] Evidence. Of his. Physical force. So much. As. We did when Jesus. Was here. This is the. This is the leader. Of the kingdom of light. And. He's now on the earth.

And. That's why we saw. Such demonic activity. During Jesus. Lifetime. This is a battle. And Jesus says. If you see me. By the finger of God. Casting out demons.

You can know. That the kingdom of God. Has come. In me. The king. That's one of the signs. That. I'm the king. I have power. Over. The kingdom of darkness.

But don't think. That just because. You don't see people. Demon possessed. His. His powers. Are any less. And so he's. Got supernatural strength. In his temptations.

That he brings. In his ability. To match his temptations. To our weaknesses. To time them. To a time in our. Our day. Our week. Our month. When we are.

[ 28 : 16 ] More vulnerable. To fall. He has power. To influence the minds. The behavior. Of people. He is called. The spirit.

Who is at work. In. The children. Of disobedience. He is supernatural. Ephesians 6. Says. That's the reason. We need. Supernatural armor.

That's the reason. We need. Supernatural strength. Of our mighty God. Because our struggle. Is not merely. Against. What? Flesh and blood. Natural men.

You might think that. She's my enemy. He's my enemy. Don't. Miss. What Paul's saying. Our struggle. Isn't just. With flesh and blood. God. But.

He says. These. These powers. Of the dark world. The spiritual forces. Of evil. In the heavenly realms. These are the supernatural enemies. Above and beyond.

[ 29 : 12 ] Human powers. And. Martin Luther says. On earth. It's not as equal. And that's why. If we in our own strength. Confide. Our striving. Would be losing. We're not the right man.

On our side. The God. The man of God's own choosing. Just ask. Who that may be. Christ Jesus. It is he. Lord of hosts. Is his name. From age to age.

The same. And he must win the battle. But there's none on earth. Equal. To Satan. Because he's super. Natural. We're way outgunned. And the sooner we know that.

The better. We won't be leaning on our own power. That's the first thing. About our enemy. He's supernatural. Secondly. He's invisible. He is a spirit. Who is at work.

And the children of disobedience. He's a spirit being. He doesn't have a body like ours. Now he can take on physical. Aspects. And so on. But.

[ 30 : 06 ] As to himself. He is a spirit. And he hides himself so well. As if there were no devil. There was no question. That Osama bin Laden.

Was behind. The terrorist activities. Against the United States. But he wasn't over here. Flying an airplane. Was he? Into a building.

No. He was. He was held out. In some. Some hideout. In some mountainous region. You didn't see him. You just saw. Those working for him.

That's Satan. He's. He's. He's. He's often. Behind. The scene. Sure. There are Satan. Worshipers. It's all right out front. And you see. Look at them. They're. They're worshipping Satan.

As if he's God. But. That is just a minuscule. Part of. Satan's operation. In the world. Today. Sadly. Yes. They're slaves.

[ 31 : 02 ] To Satan. But. Oh. He. He is at work. In ways. That. He's behind the scenes. So that you don't even see him. You may not even think. He. He exists. If you realize.

It is his work. Because he works through others. Think how he used Eve. To tempt Adam. To take some of the fruit and eat.

And Job's wife saw her poor husband in anguish. After losing all ten of their children. And all of his wealth. And then at last. Even his health. As he was covered with boils. From top of his head.

To the bottom of his feet. And exasperated. She says to him one day. Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God.

And die. Now where have we heard that before? You. You readers of the book of Job. Where have we heard those words? Curse God and die.

[ 31 : 58 ] Well. It's at the very start of the book. Isn't it? Something that Job never knew about. That behind the scenes. There was a challenge going on. Between. Satan. And the Lord.

And the Lord says. Have you seen my servant Job? There's none like him. Righteous in all the earth. And Job says. He only serves you. Because of all the blessings you give him. Stretch out your hand. And touch his blessings. And he will. Curse you. To your face. That was the challenge. God says.

Have at him. But don't touch his life. And he took all that was his. And then. Satan complains again. Oh yeah. But skin for skin. Life or life. You. You touch his life.

You touch his body. And you'll hear him. Curse you to. His face. So then. Later on. We. We hear those words. Not. Not Satan.

[ 32 : 55 ] Talking directly. To Job. But. Job's wife. Is using them. But we know. As the readers. Where they came from. They came from. The pit of hell.

Who somehow. Whispered into. Job's wife's ear. To tempt. Job. To curse God. And die. He hides himself. So well.

As if there were no devil. Just. A wife. Coming alongside. It's not just wives. Men do the same thing. Didn't Abraham. Become the tempter.

To. To Sarah. Telling her. To lie for him. Saying that he. Was her brother. And so on. Satan. Remains hidden. Our Lord Jesus. Told his disciples.

As he's walking along. With them. He says. I'm going up to Jerusalem. And there. I'm going to suffer. Many things. At the hands of the religious leaders. I will be put to death. And three days later. I will rise again.

[ 33 : 48 ] And Peter. Pulls him aside. Never Lord. It'll never happen to you. And having rebuked. The Lord of glory. The Lord of glory. Gave him a rebuke.

And said. Get behind me. Satan. I know where that's coming from. You see. The Lord Jesus. Had eyes. And ears. To hear. You do not have in mind. The things of God. But the things of man. And that's what Satan. Always is peddling. Things of man.

Not the things of God. And Jesus identifies it. But Satan's hidden. You see. He's hidden. And he uses a Peter. He uses a friend of Jesus. One of the three inner friends.

Wasn't that the problem we saw. In Pilgrim's Progress. When he's going through the valley. The shadow of death. And these demons were. Whispering blasphemous things. In Christians mind. And he did not have the wisdom.

[ 34 : 42 ] And maturity. To know where those thoughts came from. He thought he was producing them. No. Bunyan's just saying. The devil has access to our minds. And can implant thoughts. And words.

But he's out of sight. And it goes undetected. He even has preachers. That he works through. Second Corinthians 11. Paul warns the Corinthian church.

About false teachers. Who are masquerading. Kids. They're playing Halloween. With the mask. And they come looking like. Apostles of Christ. But really they're apostles.

Of the devil. And no wonder. Paul says. Because even. Satan himself. Masquerades as an angel of light. No wonder if his. Ministers.

Masquerade as servants of righteousness. So he'll use a preacher. He does much of his work. Through the world. In this anti. Christ culture. We live in. So.

[ 35 : 41 ] Satan hides behind the scenes. Doesn't he? Working out. His. Temptations. Through human beings. To do his work. Whether it's persecution. Of Christians. Or temptations of them.

But don't be fooled. Your struggle. Is not just with flesh and blood. But against. The spiritual forces. Of evil. In heavenly places. Adnan.

Afrin. Is the commander. Of Syrian democratic forces. His. He was quoted in world magazine. His saying. The fight against the enemy. You cannot see. Is much harder. He wasn't talking about the spiritual enemy.

He was talking about. Many ISIS fighters. Who have. Been scattered. And now remain hidden. Within the general population. Of Syria. And elsewhere. They're not wearing ISIS uniforms.

They're just blending in. With everybody else. In the marketplace. the fight against the enemy you cannot see is much harder that's the fight we're in brothers and sisters the enemy that is spiritual that is invisible do you know that most Americans who call themselves Christians don't even believe in Satan anymore a real Satan a real person a real being six out of ten say he's just a symbol of evil

he's just a figure of speech to represent some impersonal force of wickedness and evil in the world today a personification but there's no real person like the devil one survey revealed that only 20% of Catholics Methodists Presbyterians Episcopalians and Lutherans even believe that Satan is real these are the religious folk living in America but when our Lord was in the wilderness and for 40 days and 40 nights he was not tempted by some impersonal force he was not tempted by a symbol of evil he had personal dealings conversation with the devil who was tempting him he taught us in the Lord's Prayer not just to pray against evil but to pray lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one is your enemy that real to you?

[ 38 : 11 ] wonder when the last time you've prayed Lord deliver me today from the evil one my enemy yes he's invisible we may miss him and thirdly he's deceitful he's deceitful more crafty than any other creature was the serpent and he's made our human nature the object of his study for some 6,000 years now so he knows a fair bit about human beings he knows our particular weaknesses and circumstances we'll see more of that in weeks to come he's able to exploit them to his own advantage knowing which temptations to use against us in each circumstance knows which buttons to push which sins appeal to you which time is best to attack and he has no qualms about punching you while you're down in fact that's one of his signature moves and if he was able to deceive our perfect mother Eve in a perfect environment of the garden it's easy work to bring into sin and to deceive a fallen sinner in a tempting alluring world such as we live in and lost sinners who are gullible and have deceitful hearts that love lies and prefer them over the truth who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil it's an easy thing for Satan to just lead people along and deceive them

Luther again for still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe his craft that's it his deceit and power are great and armed with cruel hate he's full of hatred and he he he pounces upon those who are made in God's image and Christians most clearly bear that image and out of that hatred he seeks to deceive there's something else that you must know about our enemy that's the last thing the fourth thing he's supernatural he's invisible he's deceitful the fourth he's a defeated foe a defeated foe and you need to know that Christian as you're fighting this battle I haven't wanted to give Satan the spotlight this morning I'm glad to get to number four he's a defeated foe as early as Genesis 3 it was said that the seed of the woman Eve would crush the head of the serpent seed and the apostle John says in 1st John 3 8 that the very reason that the son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil he came into this world to end this rebellion and to destroy the devil's work as he's spreading sin and misery throughout the world and so we see this Jesus growing up and we see him at age 30 then being baptized and going out into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights being tempted by the devil not just at the end and those three temptations that we read he was being tempted the whole 40 days and then on top of it after he was hungry from not having eaten for 40 days then we see the three other temptations brought against him but our Lord had the best of him didn't he never once falling to him coming off the field victorious the 1-2-3 punch that we read of in our gospel accounts sent Satan reeling and waiting for a more opportune time and so he hounded Jesus all of his life and as he came closer to his obedience unto death on the cross this was the hour and power of darkness this is when Satan did his worst and he comes to him at Gethsemane tempts him to lay aside the cup

Jesus prays and comes out the victor on Golgotha he's tempted to come down save himself prove to us that you are the son of God the king of Israel he's fighting spiritual warfare and he comes off victorious it was preeminently on the cross that Satan's head was crushed by Jesus preeminently at the cross that's what the New Testament teaches us that our Lord disarmed him he made a public spectacle of him he triumphed over him by the cross the decisive battle has been won it was won at Calvary for by Christ dying he destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil and he freed those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death God raised him then from the dead three days later showing his victory over sin and death and hell and then he raised him all the way up to seat him at his right hand and the father said to his son sit here until I make all your enemies a footstool for your feet you see our Jesus is risen and reigning and he will reign until he has squashed the heads of his enemy he'll not quit until he can say of Satan and his kingdom it's finished it's over he'll cast him and those serving him into the lake of fire and brimstone where they will be tormented day and night forever

Revelation 20 so right now as the battle is raging for souls Christ by his gospel is going right into Satan's prison house of sin and he's setting free those who are slaves to Satan he's setting the

captives free he's taking captive captives for himself and making them his soldiers Christ by his gospel is bringing slaves of Satan into the glorious freedom of the kingdom of light brothers and sisters he's enlisted us as soldiers of the cross to take this saving gospel right into Satan's strongholds and to welcome people to Jesus Christ and the freedom that is found in him the eternal life that is found in him he's called us to be his liberators pointing people to Jesus if the son will set you free you'll be free indeed and so though the enemy

Satan still rages and prowls like a lion seeking whom he may devour our good shepherd protects us who are his sheep so that no one can snatch us out of his hand remember Satan tried to snatch Peter out tried to get him to deny the faith for good Jesus says oh I pray for you Peter that your faith will not fail and that's the bottom line folks why Peter didn't just totally abandon the faith it's right here it's the prayers of Jesus the good shepherd he protects his sheep and they will never perish because no one can snatch them out of my hand Satan yes he's stronger than you are but I got him on a chain and he may be stronger than human beings but he's not stronger than the almighty he's not stronger than the most high and so he tells Peter after you have recovered strengthen your brethren yes he knew all about

[ 46 : 05 ] Peter's fall but I'm going to recover you that's our savior too he restores our soul this is our shepherd and when you're restored and recovered then strengthen your brethren and so we get up and we go again and we pick up our armor that we've let down and we go in again at the battle and we persevere to the end because Jesus is praying for Jesus is sending grace to help us in our time of need until we finally are completely out of reach of sin and Satan the war ended more than conquerors through Christ who loved us so all this means for the Christian is this that we fight in this war with the greatest of confidence with the assurance of victory that one simple brother said I've read the end of the story and we win that's the whole message of revelation it's all about war isn't it it's a bloody book the book of revelation it's about this spiritual war of the ages and you get to go through it several times over and over about this war and struggle you know every time Christ wins so which side of the war are you on this morning you're on one side or the other there's no fence sitters there's no fence you're in the kingdom of darkness or in the kingdom of light there's nothing more important than this to be sure of and if you're not sure that

Jesus is your Lord and Savior listen if Jesus is not your Lord and Savior then you still are a slave of Satan you still are doing the devil's work I'm not I'm not murdering any Christian no you're rejecting Jesus that's his work and he's murdering you he's robbing you of eternal life just because you reject Jesus he's got your eyes looking for the things of this world rather than the kingdom that's coming that can never be shaken you're doing the devil's work not submitting to God and his laws carrying on this futile rebellion that will not triumph but only end in the lake of fire end your rebellion today do you know Jesus has sent his servants into the world to say Jesus is willing to have you if you will have him his gospel welcomes you to come the door to the kingdom of light and life is wide open and Jesus is saying come to me and if you come to me

I will never cast you out I receive all I don't care how long you've been serving on Satan's side of the war I will receive you I will forgive you and I will be your portion and your inheritance forever he's a willing and able savior willing to have you today just as you are come to him come to him so Christian here's our identity I'm a soldier of Christ at war with supernatural unseen enemies does that figure into your self image do you think of yourself at war if this is your identity in Christ are you living like it does your life bear the likeness of a soldier in the midst of a deadly battle what would that look like I must invite you back for next week so we'll look at what the life of a Christian soldier looks like but let me just leave you with one challenge and it's just this to pray every morning father in heaven lead me not into temptation but deliver me from the evil one today put it on your mirror put it in your car may it remind you of the battle of the enemy and of your great captain Jesus Christ who promises you power and to protect you from his the fiery darts of the evil one nothing worse than to be meandering around on a battlefield not even knowing that there's a fight going on and sadly I can be like that and we need to be reminded we're soldiers in a war that never ends this side of death may the Lord help us