

Offensive Strategy

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 February 2011

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] 2 Thessalonians 3, 1-5. Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.

And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

Well, you know there is something else going on tonight, don't you? The Super Bowl.

And the Super Bowl is a great big picture window into our culture. In the absence of real war, we dissolve ourselves into pretend war.

[1:09] And we dress our soldiers up in uniforms and watch them engage in hand-to-hand combat in the field before us. And then we scream and yell like it means something.

And the outcome of the game gives us a feeling of defeat or a feeling of victory, depending on who won. I'm really not being a stick in the mud, but it doesn't mean anything.

It has as much relevance as a Barbie car crash. And I've seen those at my house. But here you are.

And so in some ways I'm preaching to the choir maybe, or maybe not. But I'm not talking about this, like I said, because I'm a stick in the mud or I'm raining on your parade or something.

But because of what we're talking about tonight from 2 Thessalonians, Paul is talking and telling us what it means to really engage in the fight, in the war of the ages.

[2:26] The Super Bowl is nothing. History is all about this great clash between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

It's this great clash between God and the nations that we've been hearing about repeatedly in Sunday school. And so it's not a Barbie car crash, what we're talking about tonight.

Last week the theme was stand fast. It was defensive. So hold on in the face of whatever difficulties you face, whatever false teaching is out there, stand fast.

And so that was the defensive side of things. But you would be very mistaken if you thought that Paul, that the Lord Jesus, that the Word of God, is only interested in defense.

We're not trapped in the Alamo with the Mexican army all around, left here to defend ourselves, hoping against hope that we'll be able to make it out and survive.

[3:35] That's not how the Christian life is pictured at all in the Bible. Paul says stand fast, but don't stand still. Don't merely hold ground, take ground.

Fernand Foch was the commander of the French forces involved in the Battle of the Marne. And Stephanie, I'm sorry if I'm butchering this French. But he was the commander of these French forces at the beginning of World War I.

And the Germans were relentlessly attacking. They were trying to sweep through northern France, through Belgium. And they were relentlessly attacking his position.

And so what could Foch do? Well, he sent a telegram to his commanding officer. And this is what he wrote. Hard pressed on my right.

My center is yielding. Impossible to maneuver. Situation excellent. I am attacking. And that's us, brothers.

[4:38] We're hard pressed. We're surrounded. But by God's grace, we're not retreating. And we're not just merely standing still.

We're taking new ground. And so Paul has a four-pronged strategy. A four-point strategy for advancing the kingdom.

For making progress. And part of it is external. It's outside of us. And part of it is internal. It's inside of us.

And the kingdom of God is always advancing in those two different directions. Externally and internally. Outside and inside. And so, let's look at these in turn. The first prong of Paul's strategy is cheer on the gospel.

Let's cheer on the gospel. You see that in verses 1 and 2. Finally, brothers. Pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly.

[5:37] Or run and be honored. So, Paul pictures the gospel running a race in the Olympics. And the gospel is in this great contest for the hearts of men.

It's in this great contest to extend God's kingdom and his authority. And Paul says, pray that the gospel may run and win.

May run and win. But you know, the gospel isn't the only contestant in this great race for the hearts of men. The gospel is racing against human pride.

Human independence. It's racing against false teaching. It's racing against mere external religion. It's racing against all false and demonic religions that fill our world.

And it's racing against all these things that steal glory from Christ. All of those things have one thing in common.

[6:42] And that's that they're not about Jesus. They don't give honor to Jesus. They give honor to something else. But the gospel is God's entry into this great contest for the race.

The race for the hearts of men. The word of the Lord. It's the word of what Jesus has done. It's the word of who he is. It's the word of his glory.

It's the message of his triumph over sin and darkness and hell and Satan. And so we can't sit nonchalantly by while this race is going on. While Christ's glory is at stake.

And so Paul says pray. We should pray that the gospel would run and be honored like it was with the Thessalonians. Well, how did the gospel get honor from them?

Well, if you remember from 1 Thessalonians, Paul was so thankful because they received it, not simply as the word of man, but as it really was.

[7:50] It was the word of God. They accepted it as it is. It wasn't just another message. It was a word from the creator down to his creatures.

It was the word from the judge down to the convicted, guilty sinners. And so this is not just another self-help religion.

This isn't just another human, a lame human attempt at trying to make himself feel good. It's the word of God, the word of the creator to the creature.

And it changed them. They accepted it. They believed it. They put their weight on it. They started suffering for it.

And Paul says that honored the gospel. Now pray that that gospel that was honored in your life would find the same honor in other people's lives.

[8:51] That the same gospel that won in your heart, that won the contest for your heart, would win the contest for other people's hearts, that it would be crowned there. Pray that it would go on winning.

And notice that Paul doesn't just put this in the abstract. He says, Pray for us. The message can't go without a herald.

The gospel can't go without people. It doesn't run without a messenger. And Paul, Silas, and Timothy were the heralds. They were the messengers. And so Paul says, Pray for us.

Pray that we would preach in such a way that the gospel would go out of our mouths and would win victory in the people's hearts. And pray that we would be protected from evil men.

In the 2004 Athens Olympics, Vanderlei Lima, a Brazilian, was running in the marathon. And he was in the lead. Maybe you remember this story.

[9:55] He was in the lead. And all of a sudden, near like the 16th or 17th mile marker, a crazed, out of your mind, Irish defrocked priest jumped out and attacked him.

There was no one around. And it only took a few seconds. But he was attacked. And people dragged him off. But it so shook him that he fell behind further and further until he who was in the lead lost the race.

And Paul says, Pray that we would be protected. Pray that we would be protected so that the gospel could win. Well, before we move on, I just want you to notice a few things about Paul's request.

I'm very well aware that we could spend a long, long time on this passage. But just notice a few things briefly. Do you see the power of prayer in this gospel endeavor?

You know this. You've heard this. But could God do without prayer? Could he make his gospel run without prayer? Could he establish his kingdom without prayer?

[11:07] Yes. God could do without prayer. But God isn't going to do without prayer. God isn't going to do without prayer. Everywhere in the Bible.

Here in 2 Thessalonians, God says, Prayer is how I advance the kingdom of God. I take the request of my people. And as I answer their requests, my kingdom is advanced.

So God will make the gospel victorious. He'll make it run and be victorious if we pray. And I think the opposite holds to a certain degree as well.

If we don't pray, the message will not spread rapidly. It will not run and win in many cases. And I know God is sovereign and there are lots of reasons why the gospel struggles in certain places and there's a lot of reasons God does and doesn't do certain things.

But perhaps one of the reasons, and I say this just tentatively for you to think about, one of the reasons maybe that we as Reformed Baptists see no more success on the mission field is that we haven't learned to pray as we ought.

[12:28] And we haven't been cheering on our runner and we haven't been praying for the messengers with the intensity and the persistence and the fervency that God is seeking.

And I say this to my own shame. If there's a line of people who aren't praying for missions as they should, I'll stand at the front of that line. But this is something that I think we need to take very seriously and to think about.

Perhaps one of the reasons there's no more conversions, there's no more church planning going on in France and Switzerland is because we haven't been praying for it. We haven't been praying with that tenacious attitude of that widow who had suffered unjustly and she kept going back again and again and again to that unjust judge until he gave her what she wanted.

Jesus taught that parable so that we would pray and never give up. Maybe some of that tenacity we need to find. Our missionaries are there. David Vaughn, Olivier Favre, they're there.

Are we praying for them? Are we praying for them? Perhaps we haven't cared enough to cheer on our runner like we ought. And someone might say, but it's hard.

[13:54] It's hard ground. That's France. It's hard. I mean, it's full of atheists and all that and you can't expect growth. And I want to say, I know, I know it's hard.

I know it's hard ground, but I thought God was omnipotent. And I thought he could make deserts bloom. And that's what he said he would do. And so are those mere words that we confess or do we actually show that we believe them by praying?

That we pray like it's true. And so, you know, we've been playing G.I. Joe's perhaps. We've been fighting our fake battles and playing tag football when there's a war going on.

So if I really met what I confessed, I would pray. I would pray for the mission of the gospel to go out and that the gospel would run and would win.

Now notice, secondly, about Paul's prayer request. He doesn't pray for his physical and his own personal comfort. He prays for the gospel's sake.

[15:08] And so, why do, let me just ask you, to think, why do you pray for your physical protection? Why do you pray for your physical blessing? Is it merely because you love comfort?

We live in a society that is in love with comfort. And we want God to bow down to comfort with us. And we want Him to answer our prayers so that we can have more of what we want and what we want is more comfort.

And so we expect Him to answer our prayers so that I can have what I want. But that's not how Jesus lived. That's not how Paul lived. They suffered to spread the gospel.

David Brainerd was a gospel missionary to the American Indians. And during the time when God was calling him to that field and he was starting to think about it, he wrote in his journal, this morning about nine, I withdrew to the wood for prayer.

And I was in such anguish that when I arose from my knees, I felt extremely weak and overcome. You knew how to pray. I cared not how or where I lived or what hardships I went through so that I could but gain souls for Christ.

[16:32] I don't care what I have to suffer. I just want to gain souls for Christ. And if you know David Brainerd's life, that's a perfect description. He was put through the ringer and he won souls

for Christ.

And brothers and sisters, I think we need revival. If all we do is pray for our own comfort and pray for our own physical blessings but we don't pray for the advancement of the gospel, then I think we're playing G.I. Joes.

We've missed the point. And I can't leave this point without pleading with you to pray for your pastors. Pray for us that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men.

Pray that we would be delivered from ourselves. Pray that we would be delivered from other people. We preach the gospel.

We're the heralds of the message. And so we want, we live, for that gospel to be honored. So pray that the gospel would run among you and among whoever we talk to.

[17:42] We're helpless. We're mere men. We're just like you. So pray for us. That's the first prong of Paul's plan of attack.

How are you going to advance the gospel? Pray. Cheer on the gospel. Now the second prong is trust in the Lord to defend you. Trust in the Lord to defend you. Look at verse 3.

But the Lord is faithful and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. We saw this morning in Sunday school of that time in Gettysburg when the soldiers were terrified, the Union soldiers were terrified, and they were afraid to attack.

And they needed a word of hope. Well, fear paralyzes people. Fear paralyzes Christians. It's hard to think positive, to think, okay, I can advance here.

I can attack. I can take new ground. If you're always afraid of something, of afraid that you're going to be taken down or destroyed, it's impossible to advance if you're afraid.

[18:52] And Paul sees that. And so, he says, he cuts that fear right out from under, right off of its feet.

He pulls it away by saying that the Lord is faithful and he will protect you. What's the cure to fear that paralyzes us? It's a promise. And it's this promise that the Lord is faithful and he will strengthen and protect you.

And so that promise was good for Peter, wasn't it? Simon, Simon, Satan has asked you, asked to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith would not fail.

Peter, Satan wants to sift you. He wants to test you. He wants to shake you back and forth so badly. He wants to find out what you're made of. But I have prayed for you that you would not, that your faith would not fail.

And brothers and sisters, that is a promise that is good for you. It's good for you. It isn't a promise that you won't, that you won't suffer.

[19:59] It isn't a promise that you won't even fall from time to time. It is a promise that Satan can never take you as his own.

You belong, body and soul, to your faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. And he will establish you and protect you against that. And so you are eternally safe.

You are eternally safe. And trusting in that promise doesn't make any true Christian complacent. It gives them motivation to go forward. So if you're always afraid that you're going to fall and you're going to fail completely, that you're not going to make it, what are you going to do?

Well, you're going to circle the wagons, you're going to hunker down, you're going to say, okay, if I can just hold on here, if I can just hold on, if I can just go unnoticed, if I can just clam up, then I might be safe.

If no one knows and I don't have to talk to anyone, then I might be able to be safe. But that safety is an illusion. It's an illusion that we construct in our own mind and Paul says, you don't have to do that.

[21:14] Here's a promise. The Lord is faithful and he will protect and establish you. So we can't keep ourselves safe. We can't keep ourselves safe, but Jesus can and he will.

So do you see how that frees you to go on the attack, to take new ground? You don't have to hold the rear. Jesus will take care of that. So what can Satan do to me?

Nothing. Nothing, ultimately. The Lord laughs at them. Psalm 2, remember. What is there to worry about if Jesus is laughing at your enemies?

God has not given us into Satan's hands. God has given Satan into our hands. The Midian hordes were stretched out on the plain.

They had invaded Israel and there they were apparently to stay. Israel had a leader named Gideon and he had 300 men. And if you remember the story, these are the 300 men.

[22 : 24] We're not really sure what it means, but it does say they drank like dogs. And they were the only ones. Everyone else was drinking a totally different way.

So these men are odd, whatever the case. They're 300 men. And Gideon, God found him when Gideon was in a hole, in a pit, hiding.

And you remember how he wasn't a very courageous man, was he? Well, so how are 300 men and Gideon going to destroy the Midian, Midianites? Midianites.

How are they going to find the courage to attack when the Midian horde was so many and they were so few? When Gideon wasn't the most courageous man at all to begin with?

Well, God sent Gideon a word. And he said, get up and go down. I have given them into your hands. And in the Old Testament, that's the magic words of complete assurance.

[23 : 29] Those are the words that the Lord said to Joshua right before they defeated the city of Ai. Give them into your hands. You don't have to be afraid anymore. Go and attack them. Those were the words that the Lord said to Barak right before he defeated Sisera in the book of Judges.

And so, the word comes. I've given them into your hands. Nothing to fear. So, God used 300 men with torches and trumpets and he defeated the Midianite hordes.

The Lord gave them into Gideon's hands. And it's the same for you. David Livingstone was a pioneer missionary, an explorer in Africa in the 19th century.

He routinely faced dangers of all kinds. I mean, he was going into territory that no European had ever been. And he was constantly under threat from the tribes there, from animals.

And certainly, Satan was wanting to destroy his work. And this is what David Livingstone said. I am immortal till my work is accomplished.

[24 : 40] I'm immortal till my work is accomplished. And that's you. You are immortal until the work that God gave you to do has been accomplished.

And when it has been accomplished, well, you go on to better territory, won't you? Nothing can harm you finally. You might suffer.

You might die. But nothing can finally hurt you. Nothing can take you out of Jesus' hands. And Paul says, trust Him for it.

Trust Him. And if you trust Him, you will find the courage to go forward in the face of all your enemies, of that stubborn sin, of that person at work that mocks you.

You'll find courage because Jesus has you protected. In World War II, the 34th Infantry Division's motto was attack, attack, attack.

[25 : 44] attack. And that can be our motto when we know that the Lord is on our side. Now, we can go forward.

We can go forward at work. We can go forward at home. We can go forward into mission fields. We can go forward into doing hard things because we know Satan can't have us. We belong to Jesus. And so we can go forward and we can face persecution and we can face danger. We can face everything because we know that the Lord is faithful and He'll protect you. So here's the third prong of the attack.

Focus on obedience. Focus on obedience. You see that in verse 4. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.

with confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. This verse is a very gentle and kind but firm reminder to the Thessalonians to keep on obeying.

[26 : 56] To keep on obeying. Paul is confident that through the Lord's grace they have been obeying and that that is going to be their continual practice to do what we've commanded you.

Now Paul uses the very common formula to remind them to obey. Many times in that culture a political leader would say something like this.

I am persuaded that you will do such and such or I am confident that you will do this or that. It was a nice way of saying remember to do what I've told you to do.

One political leader said I am persuaded that no one will any longer recruit tenant farmers and slaves. And what is he saying don't recruit tenant farmers and slaves.

But it was a nice way of saying it. And Paul is gently saying to the Thessalonians remember what I told you to do and keep doing it. Confident that in the Lord you will do it.

[28:07] So don't stray from my word at all. In 1 Thessalonians Paul told them to avoid sexual immorality. That's one of his commands.

To live a holy life. To love each other and brotherly love. And now he says keep doing what I told you to do.

Keep it up. Remember don't stray from obedience. Well how does that fit in to everything that I've been saying? How does that fit in with the idea that we're to be on the offense?

We're to be on the offensive? Well everything. Everything. I mean what it means to go forward in the kingdom of God and advance the kingdom of God is to increase obedience.

Remember how did Jesus teach us to pray? your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

[29:05] So the kingdom of God comes when the will when his will is done on earth like it's done in heaven. When people obey on earth God's kingdom comes there.

And so advancing the kingdom is always growing in obedience. And that's what Paul is saying.

Don't let anyone think that you can go easy on obedience and expect progress in Christianity.

That's a very western idea. That just obedience is a very optional thing. And it's a very it's pandemic in our culture.

It goes under the motto of well Christianity is not a religion it's a relationship. And that's true but the problem is people take it to mean that all that Christianity is is the sort of vague relationship that I have with Jesus.

And that it's really the shapeless blob of feelings and sort of as I feel good about Jesus that's my Christianity. It's a relationship that doesn't have any of the sharp edges of an obedient life where this is obedience and this is disobedience.

[30:21] There's none of that there's none of that and we can't settle for that. We can't settle for this vague idea of I have this relationship with the Lord and obedience never comes into it or obedience is never a growing part of it.

And so what it means is this if you want to advance the kingdom of God obey. obey. Obey.

Seriously think about how you can obey better.

It isn't complex at all. Now obeying a lot of times is hard. It is impossible in our own strength. And we're going to find the resource in the next verse.

But the idea itself is not hard to figure out. Paul says if you want to move forward then obey. What do you need to start doing?

What do you need to stop doing? So examine yourself. I found this to be very helpful to just ask myself look over my life the panorama of my life and say what area do I need to start working on obedience?

[31:41] Or what area do I need to stop doing what I'm doing? And that's how you advance the kingdom of God. That's how you do it in your own life. That's how you do it in your family.

A couple weeks ago we talked about family worship. The Lord expects fathers to teach their children the word of God. And the Lord expects moms and dads to lead their children in family worship.

And so what it would mean for the kingdom of God to come in that situation is for your family to start doing something like that. So are you obeying in that area?

Have you started? Are you keeping at it? As long as you don't obey, the kingdom of God hasn't come into that part of your life. You're still doing your own thing.

It's still your own kingdom. It's still your own little kingdom. But when you start to obey, when you bring your life into submission to God's word, God's kingdom comes and you start living for his big kingdom.

[32:47] So when your family life in your time starts to reflect God's priorities and God's desires and you're doing things on earth like they are done in heaven, then his kingdom has come.

Well, what about loving God with all your heart and your soul and your strength and your mind? we've all felt greatly at that.

How about loving your neighbor as yourself? Are you working in the Lord's strength to obey? The kingdom always advances over the dead bodies of disobedience.

It always advances over the dead bodies of disobedience. When disobedience dies, the kingdom moves forward. So we've seen cheer on the gospel.

We've seen trust in the Lord for protection, for defense. Third, we saw focus on obedience. Now fourth, go deep with God.

[33:51] Go deep with God. Look at what Paul says in verse 5. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

parents. Paul is clearly praying for them. He's clearly praying for some deep heart work in their lives.

It's something that God needs to do, but it's something that we need to pursue. He prays that the Lord Jesus would direct their hearts, the very core of who they are, into God's love and into Christ's perseverance.

And the real question is, what exactly does Paul mean? I mean, we understand the Lord directing our hearts, that makes sense, but what is he talking about when he says into God's love and into Christ's perseverance?

We could take those two terms in a couple of ways. he could be talking about their love for God, or God's love for them, but I don't think he's speaking about that.

[35:14] I don't think he's saying, may God help you to love God more, or to understand how much God loves you. That's part of it, but I don't think that's exactly what he's saying. I think what he's really saying is, may God direct you so that you share in your heart the very love that God has in his heart, that God's love would fill your heart, so the love you love with is his own love.

That your heart would be flowing with the very love of God. And I think we have to understand it that way because of what comes next, of Christ's patience, his perseverance.

Paul isn't talking about our patience with Christ, or Christ's patience with his believing followers. He's talking about Christ's endurance in the face of persecution.

No one suffered persecution like Jesus did. And Jesus was patient. So, what then is Paul asking for in this verse?

What should we pursue? Well, we should pray and we should pursue a greater intimacy with God. That's what it's talking about. A greater heart-level experience of God's love and Christ's patience in our own heart.

[36:48] That we would begin to love with his love and endure with his patience. that we would enjoy such intimacy with God's heart that our heart would be reflected in his and that his life, God's very own life, would flow powerfully into our life so that our hearts would be directed into his love and into his perseverance.

Henry Scugle was a young Scottish divine when he wrote a book called The Life of God and the Soul of Man.

The Life of God and the Soul of Man. And he was answering the question, what is true Christianity? What does it mean? What's the heart of being a Christian? What is that all about?

And his answer was, it's when the life of God is put into the soul of man. It's the new birth. And what does the new birth come into?

Well, you don't stay a baby, you grow. And so as this growth happens, as the new life begins to develop, we grow into it. And it's the very life of God.

[38:03] And I think that's a perfect description of what Paul is talking about here in verse 5. And what he's telling us to seek through prayer. More of God's life in us.

So how are we going to cling to that promise? That the Lord is faithful. How are we going to find strength to pray when prayer is hard?

How are we going to find grace to obey? Well, it's not in our own resources. It's as we go deep in God, with God, that his power, the spirit that we sang about begins working in our lives, that our hearts begin to sing in tune, in harmony, the very words of God's heart.

And so what kind of love would that be? What kind of love is Paul saying, I want to see your heart taken up with and to exhibit? Well, it'd be sacrificial love, wouldn't it?

The father gave up a son. And if my heart is directed into God's love, then I'm going to be loving sacrificially. I'm going to be saying no to myself and yes to others.

[39:23] I'm going to be dying to myself so that I could live for others. And it will be a deep and enduring love. How long has God the father loved his people?

We're engraving, we're written on his hands. He chose us, he set his love upon us. And how persistent is God's love? Could I bear with him what he daily bears from me?

Could I bear with others, excuse me, what he daily bears from me? How many times do we sin? I'm reminded of Peter, how many times, Lord, shall I forgive?

Well, seven times and Jesus said no, 77 times and then he told the parable of the man with an enormous debt and that's us. So, if we've been forgiven, then that kind of love needs to be flowing in our hearts, a forgiving love.

And it's only possible by the spirit. What about perseverance? We're talking about the very patience of Christ. who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[40 : 51] Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. As we think about Christ's patience in the face of persecution, that we find strength.

So, we're to consider, how are the Thessalonians to keep growing? How are they to keep attacking? Just think about this. They were a young church.

They were a persecuted young church. And Paul is not saying, well, just stay there, hide yourselves, think defensively.

He didn't limit it to stand fast. He gave us these commands, these commands, to move forward. Not to circle the wagon, not to fall into bitterness, into despair, but to go on.

Well, how do you get that kind of power? How does a young Christian get that kind of power? Well, it's God's life in you. It's the power that you need to keep advancing in the face of enemies. It doesn't come from you, it comes from the Spirit of God, guiding your heart, so that your life becomes filled with God's life.

[42 : 08] And so it's a gift from God, but it's a gift that he gives in certain places. Put Christmas presents under Christmas trees, right? And he puts this gift of going deeper with God into certain packages and in certain places.

And two of the best ones are reading, meditation, meditation, and prayer. If you want to go deeper with God, get into the Word of God and start talking to God.

That's where we get that kind of love. As we have this abiding fellowship with Jesus that we find him rubbing off on us, and even more than that, Jesus is in us, and so he starts shining and living through us.

So it's a gift from God. So we advance. that's the fourth prong. We advance the kingdom of God as we go deeper. So extending the kingdom of God, it has the two aspects of we're thinking externally, we're thinking missions, and we're thinking internally.

Obedience, trust, and going deep with God. Now at the height of the Korean War, the first Marine division was cut off behind enemy lines, and they had 22 enemy divisions surrounding them.

[43 : 30] So they're completely surrounded, they're outnumbered 29 to 1, and the general there was Louis Chesty Puller. I don't know anything about him except his nickname was Chesty, and you've got to be quite a man to pull that off.

In his excitement, he said, they're in front of us, they're behind us, we're flanked on both sides by enemy that outnumbers us 29 to 1, they can't get away from us now.

And brothers and sisters, we're outnumbered in this world. We're under relentless attack, we're surrounded on all sides, we're under attack from temptation from the world, from the devil, from our own flesh, but by God's grace, we will fight on.

We will fight on, we'll fight on as we pray, we'll fight on as we obey, we'll fight on as we trust, we'll fight on as we go deep with God, but we're not surrendering, we're standing fast, but we're not standing still, and God is with us, and that means victory is sure, it's absolutely sure, and so you know what, they can't get away from us now, we have them right where we want them, so let's be attacking them, trusting in our Lord.

Let's pray. our heavenly father, how good it is to be your people, how good it is to have such promises, such reminders, your word, I pray Lord that you would help us as we go into our work week, as we go into foreign territories, we're completely surrounded by enemies on all sides, by people that don't love you, that need to hear the gospel, that we're tempted and we find temptation all around us and we find traitors within.

[45 : 29] Lord, will you give us faith to see your promise, to understand, to hear your promise and to believe it, that you are faithful and you will protect us.

And give us grace to not get muddle-headed so we forget what we're about, help us to focus, on obedience. Thank you, Lord, that you invite us, you encourage us to direct our hearts, to pray that our hearts would be directed further into your very life, that we would be taken up, that we would be changed.

Thank you that this life isn't dependent upon us, but you give us all the strength that we need, divine strength.

Thank you that Christ is within us by his spirit. And so we don't go into any situation with a doubt of whether we have the resources, but because we have Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit, we go into every situation knowing that we can obey, that we can resist temptation.

I pray, Father, for my brothers and sisters, that they would be encouraged to go further, to extend your kingdom outward, to extend your kingdom down into their very hearts.

[47 : 06] Lord, give them eyes and a mind that sees where they need to change. Father, I pray for those who are lost. You are a mighty Savior.

Will you save for their sake? Will you save for your sake? The kingdom of God needs to advance in their own heart and you must move.

So take new territory for Jesus' sake. Take new hearts. Make the gospel run and win. We pray not only for ourselves, but we pray for our brothers and sisters around the world.

We pray for those in our own country, in our own state, wherever the gospel is preached, by whomever it is preached by, will you make the gospel to run and to win.

Lord, thank you that Jesus is coming, that on that day the finish line will be drawn and we will cross and you will say, well done, good and faithful servant and we will participate in the glory and the joy of your gospel victory.

[48 : 20] Please give us courage as we face the rest of this week and as we go through all the things that we must go through to make it to the end.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.