

The Sword of the Spirit

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[0 : 00] Let us worship God. We shall begin by reading from Psalm 95. Psalm 95, at the beginning of the psalm. O come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone, a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation. Let us before his presence come with praise and thankful voice. Let us sing psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise. For God, a great God and great King, above all gods he is. Depths of the earth are in his hand, the strength of hills is his. To him the spacious sea belongs, for he the same did make. The dry land also from his hands, its form at first did take. O come and let us worship him. Let us bow down with all, and on our knees before the Lord our Maker let us fall. For he is our God, the people we of his own pasture are, and of his hand the sheep today, if ye his voice will hear. O come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone.

O come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone. A joyful night make do. the rock of ours, all bay. O come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone. A joyful night make do.

the rock of our salvation. O come, let us, everyone. A joyful night make do. The rock of our salvation. the rock of our salvation. A joyful night make do. The rock of our salvation. A joyful night make do. The rock of our salvation.

A joyful night will attain the Pine of Git bay. The rock of our salvation may make do.

and thank your voice. Let us excepter him with grace and make a joyful noise.

[2 : 40] For the great Lord I'm bringing above all the years.

Yes, on the earth I'm bringing His hand, the strength of the Lord is to Him.

As may as He belongs, for He has aimed at me.

The time I am lost, O Romina, in your mad-worthy day.

O come, my Lord, let us mow down with all.

[4 : 03] And God, I'm pleased before the Lord. O maker, let us all.

For He's a brother, evil, in all His own martial arts.

And of His hand, the strength of the Lord. Amen. Let us join together in prayer.

Let us pray. Most gracious God, we give thanks that we can call upon your name. And that you have extended an invitation to us to come and to worship you.

And to join together with others as they worship. To bow our knees before the Lord, our maker.

[5 : 24] We give thanks that you have revealed to us that you are God like no other. And that your people in particular can claim you as their God.

And them to be the people of your pasture as your sheep. And as you, their shepherd, lead them and feeds them and guides them.

We pray that you would remember us this day. That we would experience afresh the guiding hand of the Most High upon us. In a sensible way.

In a way that we can be sensitive to it and aware of it. That we would not come at other times without any kind of appreciation of being in the presence of God.

Help us to overcome our failings and our shortcomings. Even with regard to our most holy things. We pray that you would remember your people as they worship this day.

[6 : 32] Thankful that when they do worship, that they worship the only living and true God. The God who is God over all. The God who is God of heaven and God of the earth.

The God of time and the God of eternity. The one who has no beginning and the one who has no end. We give thanks that when we say these things we are not saying it in order to flatter.

But to acknowledge the truth of these things that are said of you through your word. And that reminds us of who you are as God. May we have an appreciation of that.

And even as we reflect upon the many ways in which you chose to speak to those who have gone before us. Especially those that are revealed to us in the scripture.

When we think of the patriarchs of old. Each one men of faith. And with families that were brought up in the faith.

[7 : 40] The wives that were instructed and taught in the things of God. And they in turn teaching their children the things that they should know of God.

And we bless you and thank you that these things are brought home to us within your word. And that you encourage us to follow their example.

And to learn from these people of old. We pray for forgiveness for the many ways in which we do come short. We pray that you would remember the families of our community here.

Remembering the neighbourhood. The congregation as a whole. Those who are an active part of it. Who worship together with your people.

And in this time of difficulty. We are not physically able to meet. But we have other opportunities. And you know who takes up these opportunities.

[8 : 42] There will be opportunity. No doubt to meet in public still. But at the present this is what you have given to us to do.

May we be mindful of the responsibility that you have cast upon us. To maintain our relationship with yourself.

Through your word. May your word be a living word to us. May you speak to us concerning the things of faith and life and manners. Encourage us to be trusting and to be faithful.

As your people are required to the end. We pray that you would remember this day. All who have a special need of you as their God.

Those who have a need to have the hand of God in mercy upon them. As they engage with various illnesses.

[9 : 42] And we have such within our community. Some who are currently suffering because of the virus. Some who are suffering because of some other illness.

We do not know which is more extreme. Which will result in what. Because these things are hidden from us. But we must remember that we have our God.

And that you have spoken to us. And that you have encouraged us to come to yourself. To bring out burdens. To bring out loved ones. And to cast them upon your everlasting arms.

May we learn to do so. And may we be constant in the bringing of these burdens to you. Not only on our own behalf. But on behalf of others.

So we pray for those who are in hospital at this time. Those who are being cared for in their homes. Remember the. Their own hospital here.

[10 : 42] And the staff members. And those who are within the hospital. Remember the care homes. Remember Bethesda. The home and the hospice. We pray for all. Who are nursing.

In these places of. Of care. Remember. Those who have a burden of responsibility. For these things. Bless them we pray. Remember Lord our nation as a whole. And the government.

Of our nation. Our nation. The Prime Minister. The Prime Minister. The First Minister. The various parliaments. We pray that you would bless them. And give to them. Encouraging words from on high. That they may know that it is not by man's endeavours.

That any prospect of relief is to be found. We are thankful that there is that set before us. But things that are not. We are thankful that there is that. For us. We are thankful that there is that set before us.

We are thankful that there is that set before us. That things that are not. Set before us. But things could change us. They have changed before. But as we see the virus being.

[11 : 41] Being. Thwarted in a measure. And the provision that is made for us. In a remedial sense.

That that seems to. Be fruitful. We pray that. That may continue to be so. But that you would speak to us. Through the way that.

We are receiving. In receipt of. Of these good things. From your own hand. May we acknowledge it as being from your hand. So remember our nation.

Remember the nations of the earth. In particular. We pray for. For the. Gospel. To have free course. Amongst all these nations. We see that the word of God is suppressed in places.

That those who are witnesses to the truth are oppressed in places. We see so much evil perpetrated. In the name of religion.

[12 : 40] By those who are opposed to the grace of God. May we secure mercy for those who are bearing your name. By praying for them. And remembering them.

At a throne of grace. Be their God we pray. And encourage them. Because. Whatever losses they may endure in this world. They will be more than amply.

Amply prepared. Provided for in the world to come. We give thanks. That that is the account that we have. That even in the history of our own nation.

In recent times. And going back into the past. That there were those who were persecuted for the name of Christ. Some who gave their life. And they did so willingly.

And you revealed yourself to them. So that you embraced them. Even in their final moments. And encouraged them to believe that. They were going to be with yourself. And no one could dissuade them of that.

[13 : 38] Even suffering. Created the pain. In death. But. The life that was without end. Was held out to them.

To sustain them. In their suffering. We pray Lord. That you would keep us from such persecution. We are fearful of it. But only in such time as is necessary.

As grace applied to those who would need it. And that is true about your church the world over. We ask then that you would remember us. And bless your word. Bless it as it is preached.

As it is heard. And may all who have been sent out by you. Be persuaded of your grace. As they proclaim it. May they do so fearlessly. For pardoning us every sin.

In Jesus precious name we would ask. All things. With forgiveness of sin in Christ. Amen. We are going to read at this time.

[14 : 38] From the Old Testament scriptures. And from the book of Psalms. And we will read. From Psalm 119.

And we can read at verse 97. O how love I thy law. It is my meditation all the day.

Thou through thy commandments have made me wiser than mine enemies. For they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers.

For thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients. Because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way.

That I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments. For thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste.

[15 : 39] Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding. Therefore, I hate every false way.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet. And a light unto my path. I have sworn and I will form it. I will perform it.

And that I will keep thy righteous judgments. I am afflicted very much. Quicken me, O Lord. According unto thy word.

Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth. O Lord, and teach me thy judgments. My soul is continually in my hand.

Yet do I not forget thy law. The wicked have laid a snare for me. Yet I erred not from thy precepts. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever.

[16 : 41] For they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes. Even unto the end.

And we'll take up the reading at verse 129. Thy testimonies are wonderful. Therefore doth my soul keep them.

The entrance of thy words giveth light. It giveth understanding unto the simple. I opened my mouth and panted. For I longed for thy commandments.

Look thou upon me. And be merciful unto me. As thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. Order my steps in thy word.

And let not any iniquity have dominion over me. Deliver me from the oppression of man. So will I keep thy precepts.

[17 : 44] Make thy face to shine upon thy servants. And teach me thy statutes. Rivers of waters run down my eyes.

Because they keep not thy law. And so on. May God add his blessing to this reading of his word. And to his name be the praise.

We're going to turn now to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. Chapter 6. We'll read at verse 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.

And in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God. That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

But against principalities. Against powers. Against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Against spiritual wickedness in high places.

[18 : 44] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God. That you may be able to withstand in the evil day. And having done all to stand.

Stand therefore having your loins skirt about with truth. And having on the breastplate of righteousness. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Above all taking the shield of faith wherewith. You shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation. And the sword of the spirit.

Which is the word of God. And so on. God at his blessing to this reading of his word. Take the sword of the spirit.

Which is the word of God. The sword of the Lord. And so on. The sword of the sword of the sword. We have over the last while. Been looking at this passage from Paul's epistle.

[19 : 45] To the Ephesians. And we come to a part of the armour. Which is distinctly different.

To what we have looked at. Up until the present. Most. If not all of the items of the soldier's armour.

Have been defensive. But now it seems that. With the sword. The mind of the apostle is more.

On attack. Certainly. That would be. How we would. Think of it initially.

But. If you were interested in sword play. It is. Quite. Plain. From those who. Engage in it.

[20 : 43] Especially as a sport. That. There are skills. Involved. That. Allow. For. For. A. Person. To.

Adopt a defensive. Attitude. As well as an offensive. Attitude. The more skilled you are. With. Either. The more skilled you are. With. Either.

Of these. The more. Points. You are able to receive. Especially when you. Engaged in the sport of fencing.

You can. Deflect the bows. The blows of the. Off hand. The person who's. Attacking you. And so on. No. I don't think it was. The sporting field that Paul had in mind.

Some of the developments. The more skilled you are with. With either of these. The more. Points. You are able to receive. Faith about the diferen. And. To bana. Some of the ■ivines tell us. That the.

[21 : 39] Greek word. That is translated sword. Here is. Mach Vaira. Which describes a type of sword. That is short. More like a dagger. And it was used. Mainly if not always for close.

Combat. combat and sometimes that is where the soldier needs to be most alert. If you think about the Scottish broadsword for example that was designed for a particular type of fray it was heavy and it was usually wielded in two hands and it did just as much damage by the weight of it as it did from the sharpness of the blade but it did not require to be used in close quarters.

But what is described here is described as the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and which must mean that the sword is the sword that the Spirit gives.

We cannot think of the sword of the Spirit as being the Spirit part of the equipment of the Christians armory. It is directing us to the Word of God in this case to the use of the Word of God as the Spirit supplies it. The sword which is the Word of God and the Spirit which is the Word of God.

The salvation was symbolised by the helmet as we saw and Robert Candlish says that the sword and the Spirit are not different. The Spirit as the sword of the Christian Christian soldier is explained to be the word of God. The word of God as it comes to the believer has already been mentioned in the gospel shoes.

[24 : 17] It is rather the word spoken by the believer. A weapon to destroy falsehood and evil and defend and promote what is right.

And sometimes the scripture uses such a description of the way that the Word of God is to be used.

Now we need to think about what the Apostle means to apply to ourselves as soldiers who are Christians.

The Greek word for word is not logos but rhema. And Sinclair Ferguson, one of the commentators, explains that we are to overcome Satan by the particular words or portions of Scripture, which is as we have said already, this is how we are meant to understand it.

When we think of the other parts of the armour, while we do not have to wear it, and it is basically worn in the only way it can be worn, no special skill is required.

[25 : 44] However, with the sword, not only is it possible to learn how to use it, but also how to use it well. As we have said, you can parry blows with your sword, be defensive as well as use it in an offensive way.

Some are clearly more skilled than others, and the same is true with the sword of the Spirit. Just as Roman soldiers were taught how to fight, it seems that they were also told where to land their blows.

They not only had to learn to be able to defend themselves, but where their blows would land was to be most effective.

So human physiology of sorts was brought to their attention, so that they could mortally wound to effect.

They could not be able to defend themselves, but they could not be able to defend themselves, but they could not be able to defend themselves.

[27 : 01] When you are engaged in a battle, and there are many, many enemies to contend with, you cannot expend your energy fighting one foe.

If you can eliminate that foe with the least bit of endeavour. And that is part of the training that they had to undergo.

And the best example we have of how we are to follow this in a Christian way, in a Christian sense, is found in the Scripture.

When we find the example again of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he is led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Three times Jesus responds to the various temptations that the devil sets before him, with quotations from the Old Testament and the book of Deuteronomy.

[28 : 15] And again and again it was by using the weapon effectively and powerfully that the most powerful of enemies is put to flight.

Very often it is tempting to fight back using the weapons that are used against us. And that is something that we have to guard against.

When we are facing those who despise Christians and Christianity.

Very often they will stir up our emotions and make us want to respond in a similar vein to the kind of language that they themselves use.

And we have to guard against that. Because it is a temptation to use weapons that are being used against us.

[29 : 24] Because that might be the first thing that we would go to. But when we are aware of the possession that we have of the sword of the spirit.

Then there is a certainty that what we do and what we say is more effective. There are occasions when we are stood up, for example, by the enmity that is against the Christian church in different parts of the world.

And especially where the Christians are a weak minority. You read about and hear about the violence that is done to them.

And you find yourself wanting to respond in kind because of the offence that is done to the body of Christ.

But we need to remember that the God of heaven does not expect us to resort to the weapons of this world.

[30 : 43] And perhaps even in our own nation, the poisonous attack that is on the Christian faith often creates in us a desire to respond with a similar use of language.

But we need to guard against that. We need to turn to God's word. And we need to use the word of God as effectively as we can.

And in order for that to be true, then we need a familiarity with it. We need to have it at our fingertips. We need to be able to speak a word in season.

We need to be able to know what to say at the right time and in the right spirit in order to be assured of success.

And that success does not necessarily mean that we will shut up our enemies. But at least we will stand our ground and be able to defend our position as believers.

[32 : 04] The Apostle Paul says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God. When we read the scripture, again Paul reminds us of the need that we have to fulfill our calling as Christians who are aware of the enmity that is in the world against the people of God.

That we should remember that when we are engaged in military activity as soldiers of Christ.

We need to remember the words of the apostle. Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, he says. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God.

To the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations on every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God. And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ and so on.

Charles Hodge, the Christian preacher and teacher, stated all the church's triumphs over sin and error have been effected by the word of God.

[33 : 37] Not affected, but effected. So long as she uses this and relies on it alone, she goes on conquering. But when anything else, be it reason, science, tradition or the commandments of men, is allowed to take its place or to share its office, then the church or the Christian is at the mercy of the adversary.

That's something that we need to remember. The temptation is with us all the time to resort to devices that are plainly the devices that are of the world.

But they are not the ones that we should put into practice. Remember the type of weapon used here is for close-quarter fighting.

The assault most likely will be against your faith or something heavily dependent upon it. We've already seen in our consideration of this passage how the assault is most likely against our faith or something heavily dependent upon it.

We've already seen how the fiery darts of the wicked assail the believer and very often it is the intellect and the emotions or the thought processes that are affected.

[35 : 10] Preacher James Philip tells of an interesting struggle he had just after the war. He was still in the forces stationed in Rennes in 1945.

On the banks of the river Rennes prior to war committed himself to the work of the ministry. But now filled with doubts he knew God's word but could not get peace.

And he struggled and he struggled and the Bible was open on his lap. And what he read was a word of encouragement to him that took away his fears.

You have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain. The word of God was the means by which God spoke into his situation.

And it wasn't just a word personal to him. It was a word that was used to thwart the enemy who were sowing seeds of doubt in his mind to something that he had committed to before the war.

[36 : 35] And that is something that many of us need to remember. We might not be called to be ministers of the gospel.

We might not be called to any other calling. But if we are thinking about doing anything for our brothers or sisters in the Lord and we have committed to do that.

You may often find that something will come your way that will deflect you from doing that. How do you deal with it if not through God's word bringing light upon the right or wrong of what you were thinking of doing?

Take the word. Learn to use it by God's grace. And learn to use it in all situations, whatever these situations may be.

There are many, many testings and many trials that confront the child of God in this world. It is a battle.

[37 : 44] We are on a battlefield. We are constantly reminded of the enmity that is in the world that comes from the pit, that comes from the enemy of our soul, that comes from his minions, that comes from those who would serve him.

And if we are not properly prepared to use the weapons that he has placed at our disposal. And what can be, if you put your confidence in God's word, you couldn't do better.

And we couldn't do better than steep ourselves in that world so that it will always be the first course that we, action, that we apply to.

That it would be the first thing that would fill out mouth. That it would be the first thing that would fill out mouth. That it would be the first thing that would draw us to reflect on the best course that we should follow.

May God encourage us to think in these things. Let us pray. Oh Lord, oh God, we are often reminded of how worldly we are.

[38 : 56] In our reactions to situations that confront us, we behave as we should not. We react in ways that are not in keeping with our calling.

We pray for mercy. We pray forgiveness for every way in which we let ourselves down and let others down. And in particular, we let our God down.

Help us to look to your word and to have your word as so much a part of our life and our heart and our mind that we cannot depart from it.

It is the entrance of your word that brings light. We read these words and we give thanks for the light that it brings. Go before us now and continue to watch over us.

Cleanse from sin and now may grace, mercy and peace go before us in Jesus name. Amen.