

The truth about spiritual warfare

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[0 : 00] So please turn in your Bible to Ephesians chapter 6 from verse 10, which is the passage we're going to look at this morning. And while you're finding the page, let me remind you that after this we have a shared meal. I'll probably forget to say that at the end, but you're very welcome to stay on to the shared meal.

We'll do a little bit of moving around tables and chairs and everything, but even if you've brought nothing to contribute, you are welcome to share together. Well, we are looking at this subject this morning, holy war.

And what subject could be more vexed and difficult for us to think about? Some of you will know that in the Old Testament of the Bible, in the book of Joshua, there is holy war.

And I think we might find that a bit of an embarrassing book in the Bible.

Holy war in its Islamic form, jihad, as perpetrated by ISIS in the name of Islam.

[1 : 19] My Saudi Arabian friend Abdullah would say that's not a proper Muslim thing to do, but obviously ISIS think it is a Muslim thing to do. Jihad, one of the most feared political realities in our world, is done as a holy war.

If we look back in Christian history, Christian in its cultural sense, we look back over the Crusades. I looked on Wikipedia to get the authoritative understanding of Crusades, and it says people are divided on this. There are different versions of the Crusades.

We've all heard of the Crusades. We've probably drawn a Crusader. I remember drawing a Crusader when I was at school. What was that? It was some sort of war, in some sense, under the name of Christ, in some sense, under the name of the church, their own Catholic church.

But in today's society, it's not something that anybody would say, oh, let's think about that. That would be really good. Just think, oh, holy war. Not too sure about that.

[2 : 28] And in our own country, in the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, Protestant versus Catholic, as it would seem, armed struggles. All unpleasant, sensitive subjects.

And therefore, you'd say, probably best avoided, really. But the passage that we have here is about holy war. In some sense, the New Testament says, fight the good fight of faith, 1 Timothy 6.12. And the book at the end of the Bible makes a promise, which is a sort of soldiering promise, to the person who overcomes.

That's a military idea, to fight and win. To the person who overcomes, well, multiple promises. For example, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

And the passage that we have before us, which is all about spiritual warfare. So, it's a sensitive subject, but we're going to see what God says about it. Objections.

[3 : 39] And you might be thinking, I do object to what the preacher is talking about this morning, because Christianity is about love and not about war.

Aggression and hate have no part in the good news of Jesus Christ, you might say, which is a fair enough point. But, Paul does tell us about the Christian to think of himself or herself as engaged in warfare.

To think of himself or herself as a soldier. So, we need to listen to what God is saying to us on this. Who or what are we to be fighting?

How do we fight? What sort of weapons are there? What is the aim of our warfare? And what will be the outcome of this warfare?

Well, those are the sort of things we might be asking God to teach us about. So, let's now put this into context. In the book of Ephesians, or the letter to the Ephesians, we've been asking this question, when God saves people, he wants them to be holy, he wants a beautiful bride, he wants his church to be a beautiful bride.

[5 : 00] What does that look like? What does holiness look like? And I keep on saying, does it look like bizarre things, like being slain in the spirit, or having bizarre miracles?

And the answer of the text is when Paul says, this is the agenda for you as Ephesian Christians, we want loving and holy Christian communities, loving marriages, orderly homes, respectful employment, and daily Christian living.

And I would say that this means that holiness makes us not superhuman, with superpowers, so we don't have to take time to do things, superpowers, so we never have to think things through, superpowers, so that it all gets zapped into us, and we can't be creative, or superpowers, that we're never responsible for our own mistakes, and for our own learning.

Holiness doesn't make us subhuman, it doesn't make us like animals, but it makes us truly human. And I think there's a key point there, that Christianity is there, God wants us to be what he's made us to be, in the image of God, truly human, and that's what it's all about.

So the aim of these sermons is to end up with beautiful, useful, appreciative children of God, as churches, as communities, as witnesses, giving strong personal evidence for Jesus Christ, in marriages, as husbands and wives, in families, as parents and children, as workers and employees, as spiritual soldiers, in the ongoing battle, and in the world to come, the spotless, radiant bride of Christ.

[6 : 37] So that's the aim, and this is the one about warfare. So what's all this about war? Let's just think, stand back a little bit, warfare. The Bible has a big story, starting at the beginning, and finishing at the end.

And at the beginning, God made everything good. It didn't happen by accident. God made everything. And the first human beings, in particular, the first human male, Adam, fell into sin, by disobeying God.

And he was tempted, to do so by Satan. And the Lord says, right at the beginning, I will put enmity, being enemies, conflict, between the serpent, that's Satan, the serpent's offspring, and the woman's offspring.

He, that's the woman's offspring, will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. So there's the serpent.

Later on, he becomes a dragon, but it's a sort of reptilian representation of Satan and his offspring. So there's little Satan's, little opponents, little henchmen.

[8 : 01] And the promise of the Bible is that a human being, the offspring of the woman, will crush Satan.

And that's the story of the Bible. And that's a story of conflict, life and death conflict, enmity, battle. And you find it cropping up in the storyline of the Bible.

For example, in Exodus, the Lord will be at war with the Amalekites from generation to generation. That's just a little outcrop of this ongoing war. At the end of the Bible, it says, the lamb has triumphed.

So there's the end of the war. Satan is defeated. That's what we're aiming for. And the promises like this to the one who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life.

So war is the story of the Bible. You can't get out of that. That is what the reality of it is. Let's look at the text. So were you convinced by the first bit?

[9 : 07] Yeah, that is what the Bible is all about, actually. Let's look at the text and see what it says. So it says, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

So the first thing is to be strong. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. So put on the full armor, the full armor of God, so that you can stand against the devil's schemes in verse 11.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, 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 will be able to stand your ground and have, after you've done everything, to stand.

So stand is mentioned three times. And he says, what are we fighting against? We're fighting against Satan. Let me just get my...

I've lost my place. Where does it say Satan's schemes? Which verse is that? That's it, yeah, verse 11.

[10:20] So again, Satan's schemes. And the armor is itemized. We'll come to the items of the particular items of armor in a moment. And he ends up by saying, and, this is now verse 18, pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers.

And he includes himself in that. So if you boil it down, it starts off by saying, be strong. And it says, put on the armor so that you can stand. Tells us about Satan's methods or against the, Satan's schemes.

Itemizes the armor and then concludes with talking about prayer. So we'll do those a bit at a time. Okay? It's quite warm in here. Do you think if we had the door open, we would have a little bit more air?

As long as children don't rush hither and thither. Okay, let's take this a bit at a time then. So verse 10, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

First thing. As Paul concludes his letter, he says, okay, guys, last thing for you. Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

[11:40] So what he doesn't say is, be strong in yourselves. Okay? Each of us has different strengths. Some people have got fantastic memories.

Some people are really muscular. Some people, well, you know, go on and on. People have different strengths. But he's not saying that. He's not saying, be strong in your, you know, whatever capacity you have.

He says, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. So it's important to notice that he's saying strong in the Lord. Christian's strength, I once heard it said, and I think this is right, is borrowed strength in perceived weakness.

So we might say, Lord, I've got a great memory. Thank you for my great memory. But that's not enough for this. I need your mighty power, which I don't have. Please give me your strength for today.

Make me strong, not in the fact that I've got multiple degrees or earn a million dollars a month or whatever it is, but make me strong in you what you can give me.

[12:48] His power, his mighty strength. And interesting, if you look back, Paul has already spoken about this. In chapter 1, verse 19, he has said, I want you to know, chapter 1, verse 19, I want you to know his incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. He said, God's power was there in Jesus Christ raising him from the dead and that's, that power is at work.

That's the power to be strong in. He mentioned in chapter 3, verse 16, I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

He says that there's power to be indwelt by God. That's the power for you to be strong in.

Chapter 3, verse 20, he says, now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we, all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory.

[14:11] His power at work within us, that's the power to be strong in. Lord, strengthen me with your power, the power that you had when you rose Jesus from the dead.

And he says it is possible. You see, we might say, well, I don't have a good memory, don't earn a million dollars, not very muscular, got no strength at all.

I can never be strong. But you see, Paul is saying, well, actually you can. There's a sort of secret to this. Be strong in the Lord. You know?

You can probably think of people who are extremely fragile in their physical makeup, maybe even fragile mentally, who are extremely strong in the Lord.

Okay. First thing, be strong in the Lord. Second thing, let's look at the armor. Put on the full armor of God.

[15:16] And I want to emphasize the full bit. The total kit. Put on the total kit. The full set of equipment.

That is the idea of this. The full armor. Okay. You know? Okay. Full armor. And he itemizes this. So he says, he says, verse 14, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.

So the belt, he says, I've drawn, I don't know whether you noticed, I've drawn a little Roman soldier there. And we'll see the bits.

There are. There's the belt. The breastplate, he says, that is linked with righteousness. And the feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Verse 15. So in case you didn't know where feet were, there's an arrow showing you where feet are on the diagram. He says, take the shield. The shield is the shield of faith.

[16:23] It's likened, linked with faith. There's the shield. And he says, it's very helpful. No, it doesn't say very helpful. It's, this is your defense against the flaming arrows that Satan would fire.

And here is a piece of armament that is a defense against Satan's fiery darts. He also lists the helmet of salvation.

Where have I got to? Helmet of salvation. Verse 17. And the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. So all those different items making up the total kit that the soldier is equipped with.

Spiritual armor. So let's just ponder, first of all, this thought that it is a total package. So we were thinking about this in a little study time on Thursday.

And you could itemize all the horrible things that would happen to you if you were in a battle and you didn't have the appropriate bit. So if you wander into a battlefield with bullets going all over the place and you don't have a helmet on, bullets could make a terrible mess of your head.

[17:41] And if you're in a sword fight and you don't have any armor, there's all sorts of soft places that you could be stuck with a sword which you would very much regret if you didn't have your armor on.

Yeah? And you could go on like that. We've got lots of soft spots and weak areas. That's what armor says. You know, you're not like the Incredible Hulk.

Okay? You won't like me when I'm angry. You know, Incredible Hulk. And he can lift up cars and he doesn't need any armor because he's the Incredible Hulk.

But we're not the Incredible Hulk. We're who we are. And we jolly well need armor because we've got all sorts of soft areas that are very vulnerable. And he says, put on the full armor.

It's a reminder of our weakness, isn't it? So you might be sitting there thinking, he's telling us all about strength, but I'm weak. Actually, this is telling us about our weakness.

[18:46] We are very weak, vulnerable. And at the same time, God gives us adequate protection.

You can go into battle and you can stand not because you're the Incredible Hulk, but because you have got the armor that God gives.

He gives it to every soldier. You can stand. So it gives us two things. It gives us a realistic sense of our own intrinsic weakness. goodness. And it gives us a sense of security that there is a provision that God makes whereby we don't have to be daunted.

We can be secure. We can stand. We can have a sense of security. Okay. So that's one thing.

Now let's go a little bit into a little bit more detail about the armor. So preachers take this off on different ways. And I'm a little bit intimidated by the subject because I know that it's a familiar subject.

[19:52] So what comes next? Okay. Helmet, belt, breastplate, da-da-da-da. So one... So I'm asking the question, where does this thought of armor come from?

So one way we could do it is to say we could do... What's it called? The study of the body. Anatomy, isn't it? We could do an anatomy thing and say head, brain, helmet, breastplate.

You know, you've got all sorts of organs in here. I mean, lungs, heart, breastplate. We could do it according to the analogy of what goes on in different parts of the body.

We could do it that way. I'm sure there's something in that, but I'm not going to go that way. We could do it from a Roman soldier point of view. We could say there's Paul. He's in prison. He's an ambassador in charge.

There's a Roman soldier standing next to him. How are you doing, Servetus? Yeah, okay. Yeah, how are you doing, Paul? What are you in prison for? You know, all that sort of stuff. And Paul could be saying, what's that thing?

[20:51] That's a sword, isn't it? Well, that's a good idea for my letter. He could be doing it that way, but I think that doesn't quite get the hang of it. Notice that Paul uses these same metaphor in different places.

If you'd like to flip over to 1 Thessalonians, he says in chapter 5, verse 8, Since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

So it's a little bit different to what he says here. Not exactly different, but a little bit different. So I think there's a bit of interchangeability about the armour.

And I think he doesn't get the idea of armour from any of those places, but he gets it from the Old Testament of the Bible. Here are two texts.

I'd like you to turn to them if you possibly can. So here is Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 4 and 5, which says, Isaiah 11, 4 and 5, it says, With righteousness he will judge the needy.

[22 : 21] With justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. With the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

Righteousness will be his belt. And faithfulness the sash round his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb. The leopard will lie down with the goat.

The calf and the lion, et cetera, et cetera. So do you notice there that there is some of this armour reference. It's put as a rod, a stick, from the mouth, a belt, righteousness, faithfulness, the sash round his waist.

So I'm going to ask you this question. Who is it referring to? What is this person going to do? And why this armour? So that's genuinely a question.

I'm not going to go any further until somebody's answered it. Okay, Jesus. That's always a good answer, isn't it? Could anybody be more specific from the text? So it is Jesus.

[23 : 30] It's the shoot from the stump of Jesse. Chapter 11, verse 1. So Jesse being? The father of David. So we're talking about the royal family of David and we're saying a son of David will do these things.

So that's Jesus. Okay. And what is he going to do? Why does he have this equipment? Thank you. Which verse were you thinking of? Verse 4. He will strike the earth to what he might and break his lips. Break his lips. He will play the rickets.

Thank you very much. So it's an aggression. It's to destroy his enemies. Yeah, thank you very much indeed. And he also, notice verse 6, brings in peace.

He does both of those things at once. He destroys the wicked and brings peace to his people. So that's... And we'll sort of hold fire a little bit on the why this armour.

[24 : 40] Well, I put it was Messiah. He saves his people by destroying their enemies. Right, let's look at another passage. Isaiah 59. So in that one, it was Messiah.

Isaiah 59, 16 to 20. Isaiah 59. Let me read it to you.

The Lord looked, was displeased. There was no justice. He saw there was no one. He was appalled that there was no one to intervene. So his own arm worked salvation for him. His own righteousness sustained him.

He put on righteousness as his breastplate, the helmet of salvation on his head. He put on the garments of vengeance. He wrapped himself in zeal as with a cloak. According to what they have done, so he will replay.

Wrath to his enemies, retribution to his foes. He will repay the islands their due. From the west, men will fear the name of the Lord. From the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory.

[25 : 39] For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the Lord drives along. The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins, declares the Lord. Do you notice the armour bit there?

Do you notice it? Verse 7. Righteousness as a breastplate, helmet of salvation on his head, garments of vengeance, etc. Paul doesn't quote all of them, but he quotes some of them.

Who is this referring to? Who is the person that is dressed in this way? Genuine question, not going on until somebody answers. The Lord.

Thank you. Yeah. And what is he doing? What is his mission? Judging. Thank you. And let's include verse 20 as well.

Redeeming. He's judging and redeeming. And I'm asking you a question, why is it put in terms of armour?

[26 : 41] So you see, what we've got here is there's a situation of God's enemies taking God's people into captivity, God's enemies rebelling against God and God having said, you know, the Messiah will come and crush the head of the serpent?

He said that. But the situation doesn't reflect that. And it says, God will clothe himself in this way. It's the Lord.

He judges his enemies and gets glory as the Redeemer. Now, I'm just trying to get a handle on why it is that there is this clothing thing, armour thing. Why does it say God clothes himself with a breastplate and helmet and so on like that?

I've been thinking about that. I don't think it is saying that God adds something extra to himself. And I don't think it's saying that the clothing covers something different underneath. Sometimes you might think about that, you know, you might put on a smart suit and you haven't had a shower.

[28 : 05] You know, the outside of it doesn't necessarily reflect what's on the inside. And I don't think it's like that. I think what it's saying is that God is rousing himself into action.

The helmet the breastplate the cloak are all things that God is anyway. But the language of clothing means he gets them into action.

For example for example okay I'm just trying to look David is a runner. I am right aren't I?

Yeah. David is a runner. And Wendy might say to him you're a runner David what are you doing here on Saturday afternoon in front of the telly watching Midsummer Murders.

Get your running shoes on. Get out and run. This is what he is. And the clothing says I'm going to get that into action. Or you might be a gardener.

[29 : 14] I'm going to get into deep water here aren't I? So somebody is a gardener. Debbie's a gardener. You're a gardener aren't you? And Bill might say to Debbie here it is Saturday afternoon you're watching Midsummer Murders.

You're a gardener. Get your gardening clothes on. Get your gardening gloves. Get out and garden. Sorry I did not make to be. Or you might be a cook.

So Maria is a cook. So it might be coming up towards tea time and she's watching Midsummer Murders. And I say come on Maria you're a cook.

That's who you are. Get your get out there. Get your knife going. Get your pinny on and everything. Get cooking. I'd never say that.

But you see in all of these cases the clothing is to say something that you already are gets put into action. And this is how it is with God.

[30 : 19] He clothes himself with righteousness or he puts on righteousness as a breastplate. God is righteous. But he says right I'm going to put that into action. I'm going to get my righteousness into action.

I'm going to get righteousness in. I'm just going to get out and make sure justice happens. God is faithful. He's promised things.

Why is God seeming to snooze and not fulfill his promises? He puts on a belt of faithfulness and gets out there making his promises happen. He's a saviour and he puts on salvation as a helmet. He gets out there saving his people. And he's a judge and he's letting people get away with evil and he puts on vengeance as a cloak and he goes out there and sorts it out.

and he's a redeemer. And what's my verse for this? Well it says that he's a redeemer. He puts on redemption it doesn't say that but this is the idea.

[31 : 24] He gets to work redeeming. Now that is what these Old Testament texts are about. Messiah does the Messiah things. God does the God things.

And that's where this comes from. Where does it come from? So I think Paul is picking up on these and he's saying you Christian guys you have a God that gets to action.

You get to action too. You're soldiers. Get your boots on. Get your breastplate on. Get your helmet on. Get doing the things that Christians do. Clothe yourselves with the same things that God himself clothed himself with.

Put on the same armor that Messiah put on. It worked for him. You put it on too. Sorry I set them all off haven't I? God in action in us.

So he's saying just coming back to Ephesians there is a truth and there is a God truth and a God reality. Put it on as it were like a belt.

[32 : 40] Get out there with truth in action. Righteousness. We believe in God's holy goodness. Live it out.

Put it into action. We believe that the gospel reaches out to all people. We believe that. Now put on those shoes.

Put that into action. You believe in faith? You believe the truth of God don't you? Well make it like a shield that is actually put to work.

Start believing the promises of God. Start standing on the promises of God and when Satan's fiery darts come in saying oh you don't believe that you can't believe that can you? God doesn't really mean that that won't really happen.

You put on the shield of faith and put it into action. And salvation God's determination to save his people to keep his promises to glorify his son.

[33 : 36] Put it on like a helmet like God did. The sword of the spirit that's Messiah's particular weapon.

The sword that comes out of his mouth to establish his reign. And you too can have that as a weapon coming out of your mouth.

There's an amazing thing. You too can have certainty about the word of God. You can read it and by the Holy Spirit say that's right that's true you can stand on those promises and you have the capacity like Messiah has to speak that out powerfully.

It doesn't mean that you shout at people like I was just doing but that speaking truth is a powerful thing speaking the word of God and the praying bit which he goes on later as well.

You Christians have the capacity to pray so be praying. Okay let's move on to what the enemies are. I think that gives us a little handle on the thing about the armour.

[34 : 45] Who is it who are we fighting? Well let's just see what he says. Verse 12 our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Not against flesh and blood.

So we're not out to slay people who disagree with us. This isn't a Christian version of jihad. It's not like that. We're not fighting in fact against flesh and blood.

But he says there's a spiritual battle going on. Rulers, authorities, world powers, spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

This is an invisible battle. The basis of it is invisible. That's what we're fighting. And you might be interested to think back Acts chapter 19.

Ephesus was a place where people were really into magic and occult and that sort of thing. And when people were converted they burnt their magic books. So they'd be thinking about heavenly powers and all that sort of thing.

[35 : 45] And Paul says you're absolutely right. This is what our battle is like against heavenly powers. Mind you, we don't fight it by, I don't know what they have in garlic and silver crucifixes and pentagrams and things like that.

That's not the way we do it. That's not how we fight this spiritual battle. That's our enemies and he repeats that. And I think this is to us a warning against presumption.

A warning against thinking that the spiritual life is just lived on what we can see. Look into my diary, meeting here, so and so there.

Oh, that seems fairly easy. We are actually fighting against invisible enemies. We can't see them, they're real, they're in the heavenly places.

And woe to us if we think, oh, can't see any problems, well I won't bother with the armour today, don't bother with that. No, no, no.

[36 : 54] Please be aware, every Christian is a player in this vast cosmic battle and it never stops. So don't think you can do evangelism without armour or apologetics without armour or witnessing to your neighbour without armour or living the Christian life without armour or maintaining a witness of a church without armour or being a Christian minister without armour or living a Christian marriage without armour.

You please understand what I'm meaning about that by making everything a matter of prayer and Christian faith. And having said that which is a bit scary again we have the reassurance that he says this armour is adequate even to this cosmic battle.

So you don't have to go on a special course on how to cast anything out or how to any of those things. Just do what it says here.

That's adequate. I think I've got the same slide twice. Yes. Okay. Now let's think what's the mission. What is the mission?

You've heard of mission creep? Mission creep is when you're sent into battle to do one thing and they say while you're there could you also do something else and could you do that as well.

[38 : 26] And it won't be just six months it will be six years. That's mission creep. So what is the mission that we've been sent on? So Christian various Christians have various senses of what the mission is in a spiritual warfare.

So some Christians will be binding this this and this. Other Christians will be rebuking this this and this. But none of those things is mentioned here. He says this is your mission.

This is a conundrum for you. S something A something D. It's in the text. Stand. Stand.

Yeah. Is that right? S T A N D. And it's three times. What's your mission? What are your orders? Stand.

Stand. I mean there are things in the what have I got? Verse 13. And when you stood stand.

[39 : 26] Verse 13. after you have done everything to stand. Now there are things in the letter that are about growth and progress and going forward. Renewing of the mind progressively being built up progressively walking forward.

But this one isn't. It says this is your order from the captain of the army. You stand. And when I come back I want to find you standing here.

And in 70 years time when you are considerably older than you are now I want to find you standing. And the day of your death I want to find you standing.

That is your orders. You take up that armour and you stand. Whatever Satan throws against you, whatever fiery darts, ambushes, tricks, deception, spiritual oppression, whatever, you stand.

Those are the orders. Stand. And we know some people do not stand. And we pray, Lord, let it not be me.

[40 : 37] And the secret of this is knowing how weak we are. Because it's the proud that fall. Keeping weak is a very good tactic.

Lord, I need your strength today. I don't dare tackle that without your help today. I need the power of almighty God today.

All you're doing is taking the rubbish out. Well, I still need your power, Lord. I don't dare go any further because I've been under orders to stand. stand. So make sure you stand.

It's very serious. It sounds very simple. You think, oh, well, he should have told us something much more ambitious. But I'm saying that what the Bible says is you make sure you stand.

Make sure you stand so that you profess Jesus Christ. You said, I love Jesus Christ. I belong to Jesus Christ. I'm going to live for Jesus Christ. Make sure you are doing that today.

[41 : 40] And make sure you are doing that tomorrow and the day after. Stand. So let's look at the final command, which is prayer.

Verse 18. Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and keep on praying for all the saints and pray for me also.

Pray that I may declare the message fearlessly. Now, is prayer a weapon? We had a little discussion about it. It doesn't say and take the spear of prayer or take the kalashnik off of prayer. It doesn't liken it to a weapon the same as he did other things. But it's there or thereabouts, isn't it? It's very close. If it isn't actually a weapon, it's very close to being a weapon. And time's on its way. He says, just pray. pray on all occasions.

[42 : 46] Going down to Aldi, praying. Making a cup of tea, praying.

Getting out of bed, praying. Washing up, praying. Pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayer and requests.

Oh Lord, a lot of my prayers are quite short prayers. Well that's included. Maybe you can pray some long prayers. Maybe you can pray some regular prayers. Maybe you can pray some particular prayers at particular points.

All kinds. Just pray. pray. And he says, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. And he says, what I don't want to find you doing is to say, if I said to you, when was the last time you prayed, and if you were to say, oh, I don't know, I think it was last month, I think.

I think I prayed last month. He says, that's not what I'm talking about. I want you to be alert. It's like Jesus has gone to sleep on the job. I want you to be wide awake in praying.

[43 : 59] I don't want to hear you say, last time I prayed was a month ago. I want you to be wide awake on this. And I want you to be persistent and not spasmodic.

Always keep on praying for all the saints. So don't do it like my gym membership. This is a source of great embarrassment to me. I had a one year offer on gym membership and I went three times. One year. I can see the shock and horror on people's faces. Or understanding. Thank you so much. But imagine if it was like that in prayer.

Do you pray? Yeah, I've got a membership of it. And how many times did you pray last year? Oh, three times. I mean, that's just ridiculous, isn't it? He says, I want you to be praying all the time.

And to pray, well, he says, you can pray for everybody. Pray for him. Pray for your brothers and sisters. prayers. So, he just says, this is part of it.

[45 : 04] Just keep on praying. So, final, final thoughts here. What's the insight here? Sorry about the small writing. In the warfare of the cosmos, because that's what we're in, here are Christians.

And Christians who believe the truth, they have faith, live according to God's good promises and holy character. Christians who are impelled by the gospel, moved by the gospel, people who trust Jesus on a moment by moment basis, people who have the helmet of salvation, the hope of salvation, looking forward to the final day, Christians who know their Bibles, Christians who pray, these people are powerful supernatural warriors.

you say, hold on a minute, the Hulk is a powerful supernatural warrior, the incredible Hulk. And I say, no. Miss so-and-so who prays and believes the Bible and who quotes it to us in the authorised version, most of those dear people have passed away, this person is a mighty, spiritual, supernatural warrior.

And you can be that, in fact you are that. These people are totally aware of their vulnerability, they are totally reassured by the armour of God, that armour is good enough, and they live the Christian life in a fighting spirit, so not half-heartedly, oh I don't know whether it's worth living the Christian life, stand you being given orders, put on the armour, be strong in the power of his might, and a fighting spirit, and not as if they're on the losing side, oh I don't know whether it's worth doing this, I don't know whether it's going to work, you are on the winning side, you're on the winning side, morale, positiveness, and not living as if it didn't matter, oh I don't know whether I'm going to do Christian stuff, or I'm going to go out with mates, or whatever it is, that won't do, fighting, you're a soldier, you have got orders, you have been given the equipment, you know, God hasn't put you into one of those horrible snatch land rovers, which will get you blown up, he's given you the full armament, now go on and get on with it, be purposeful, powerful, soldiers for Jesus Christ, live this way and overcome, whoever overcomes, says Jesus, I will give the paradise of God, the crown of life, amen.

[48 : 07] that's... that's... that's...