

Battle-Ready Believers: Strategies for Spiritual Warfare

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[0 : 00] Talking about a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The Lord is calling for soldiers.

! Faithful soldiers.! Good soldiers. I think we're all called to be Aussie battlers, if you like.! Aussie battlers. Serving in the army of the Lord.

Paul exhorts Timothy to be a faithful soldier. He has a call to arms tonight. And God's army is not by conscription, but by enlistment. And he calls for faithful soldiers.

What does that look like? We see that in verse 1 of 2 Timothy 2. It tells us as a soldier, we're called to be strong. It tells us there, verse 1, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Be strong. Be strong in grace. We have some fighting to do. Who can identify with that? You've got some battles going on. I'm sure we all have. One way or the other.

[1 : 05] And some battles yet to face, too. And so we're called to be strong. Be strong, brother. Be strong, sister. I like to urge people that way. That the strength is the grace, and the grace is the strength.

That's how we are to be strong. In the grace. In God's grace. And grace, we think, grace, God's riches at Christ's expense. It's his unmerited favour.

We don't deserve it. Yet he yields it. He pours it out, doesn't he? At the cross. And God's grace is not just pardon for sin. It's power for living. It's not just for our saving.

It's for our living. For our lifestyle. And we've got power today. We've got strength today. And the strength is his grace. It's not our strength. It's not our working.

It's his grace that's the strength that we need, isn't it? And, friends, tonight we're in a war. We are in a war. And the war is more inward sometimes than outward, too. Sometimes the biggest fight is on the inside of us, isn't it?

[2 : 04] Can you identify with that? The flesh versus the spirit. The battle raging within. The good that I would, I don't do. And what I ought not do, I do.

But yet there's grace. And there's grace here. The grace is our strength. It's an inward strength. It's inside of us. God's grace that saves us. It's God's grace that he gives to us.

He's the giver of it. And we're told elsewhere to grow in grace. It's grace that we're called to grow in. We can know grace upon grace upon grace.

And so we urge to, number one there, be strong. Be strong in grace. Be strong in grace. Secondly, we see verse 2. Already on the second point.

This is going to be a quick sermon. It says, be faithful. Really, be faithful. It says here, Paul tells Timothy, Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

[2 : 59] And the things that thou hast heard, he says, of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men. Faithful men. Then you shall be able to teach others also.

So, when you think about what it's saying here, the good soldier, and we're in the army of the Lord, there's a sense where we're army, we're armed, we're dangerous, we're soldiers, as it were.

We're called unto his service as soldiers would report for duty. We're called to that soldier aspect of the Christian life. And the good soldier here, it's saying, Paul tells how the soldier is to commit what they've heard, commit the word of God, it says, unto faithful men.

And that's what we try to do. That's why we have Bible studies in our church. That's why we have the new Christian training. That's why we have training, so we can grow. And it's one of the big things about the military, isn't it, Don?

They're good on training. They've got various training courses. You can learn to be a cook. You can learn to be a truck driver. You can learn to be a pilot. You know, the military trains people, doesn't it?

[4 : 07] And the good soldier is called to the task of training others. Not only are we to be growing and saved and God's people ourselves, but we're to train others.

We're to tell others. We're to teach others, it says. Paul tells Timothy to transfer that we learn to others. To other faithful men.

And I was talking with someone lately, I've got to get ready to pass the baton on. You know, if I might fall off the perch one day, that there'll be some others that can take that baton and run with it. And so we need to be training up the next generation. We need to be training others. Faithful, faithful men. God is looking for such men. Faithful men. The Lord calls us to be such men as well as faithful good soldiers.

To be trustworthy, in other words. To be true and faithful and steadfast. And we must then find others that we train. The next generation. The ones younger than us. The ones who might be newer in the faith.

[5 : 11] We want to train them, don't we? That's why we've got these training sessions, these training aspects that we're planning further training as well. We must find these ones, the faithful men, and we must train these faithful men, the next generation.

So in a way, we're all meant to be recruiters. I like the idea, you know, in the military, they have a recruitment agency, don't they? They have a recruitment unit and they want to recruit new soldiers. We want to be like that too, don't we? We want to be telling others of the Saviour. We want to be telling others about his saving. We want to be able to tell others how they can be saved. And then we can teach them how they can grow as Christians too.

As along the lines of this morning's message, that we can grow and increase our faith. We can be stronger in our faith and strengthened. And so faithful men, it tells us here, faithful men, these are men who've got reliability.

Think of the faithful. They're the ones who'll stick at it. They'll stick at it. And we think about soldiers. A good soldier is always on duty. Always on duty.

[6 : 13] And like I say, in the military, it takes lots of talents and skills to fight a war, to be an army. In an army, there's got to be the navigators, the marksmen, the medics, the cooks, those who carry the loads, those who clean up, those who do the running around, the truck driving, whatever it be.

All of these roles are all critically important for the army, for the cause. And we almost rise to the occasion. It's the same in the church too, isn't it? That there's lots of roles. There's lots of opportunity to serve.

And when you think about an army, we think about soldiers. Wherever the soldier is in the world, they wear their uniform and they're an ambassador. They're a representative of their commander and their nation.

So we think of the Aussie soldiers when they're out there with their slouch hats on. You can't mistake them, can you? They know that that's an Aussie soldier. So they could be in some foreign country, but they're representing the nation of Australia.

It's the same for you and me, isn't it? That we're always wearing the uniform, as it were, the armour of God. We're always ready for that service unto our Lord.

[7 : 20] And wherever you are, people are looking to you and they say, Oh, that's a Christian. They're a Christian. And they judge the church. They judge our commanding officer by how we represent him.

And so we think of faithfulness today. It's been said that small drops of water hollow out a stone. That's what a man called Lucretius said before Christ was born, some 96 BC.

So there's a sense where small drops of water will hollow out a stone. Think of that drip, drip, drip on a stone. If you get enough drips, it makes a hole. And it's just the faithfulness, isn't it?

Faithfulness. You might think my little bit is just a little drip. But the sense where if you're faithful, you'll make an impact. You'll make an impact on your family. You'll make an impact on your workplace, on your community.

So just keep plugging away. Like the little drip on the stone. And you'll make an impact. God is looking really just for faithfulness. Faithfulness. You might say, I'm nothing special.

[8 : 22] You can do your bit. It could be just like that drip on a stone. You'll be that faithful soldier who'll man your post. And faithfully so. And the faithful. You can count on the faithful to be faithful.

No matter what. Whether it's sentry duty. You know, the irksome things. Manning the post and staying awake when everyone else is having a sleep. Whether it's kitchen duty. Whatever it be. Be

faithful.

Faithful to your post. What does a good soldier look like? When you think about a good soldier. A soldier's orders determine where he lives and how he spends his time.

Now the soldier doesn't really have much freedom to say, oh, I'm not doing this or that today. You know, you'll say, what's the commanding officer? What's my orders for today? That's what I'm going to do.

That's how I'm going to live my day today. By what the commanding officer tells me. What his orders are for me. That's how I'm going to determine how I spend my time. And we think about the faithful.

[9 : 22] The faithful are there when the work needs doing. The faithful, they will show up. They'll be ready to serve. And you might say, well, preacher, I don't have much ability. I'm a bit limited.

I'm limited what I can do. And we get that way. I'm finding as I get older, I'm a bit more limited. I'm a bit less able. And it's true for all of us, isn't it? You can have those moments when we think, I used to be able to do much more.

I think when I was a lot younger, I was doing a whole lot more in the church. You know, driving the bus, running the youth group, running this and that, running pretty much everything and still working a full-time job.

I don't have the same energy level that I had when I was a bit younger. But you might say tonight, I've got limited ability. It's true what Theodore Roosevelt said. Do what you can with what you have where you are.

That's simply that, isn't it? Do what you can with what you have where you are. God's given you an ability. God's given you opportunity. That's what faithfulness looks like.

[10 : 21] You just do what you can where you are. And do your little bit and keep on doing it. And you'll make an impact. You may not think that you matter much. But do the bit that you can do. And do it faithfully.

God will bless you for that. And part of being faithful is enduring. Verse 3, thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

There's a need to be enduring. And endurance is sometimes hard, isn't it? Paul's telling Timothy there, he's saying endure. He's saying endure hardness.

Endure hardness. You might think, well, that doesn't sound that easy. You know, I've heard the kind of the easy breezy kind of messages out there. And, oh, does that mean I've got to have some hardness as a Christian?

Well, that's what it says. It says there's some hardness there. Okay, get used to it. You know, suck it up, as it were. There's some hardness there. Now, this is something that might take a while for us to grasp.

[11 : 19] That the walk with God can include hardness. It can include enduring hardness. And hardness is not easy, is it? It means digging deep. It means tough times. We can have tough times.

We can think, wow, I've been through some horrible things. I've been through this or that. We can all say, whatever it be, tough things happen in life, don't they? And we can think, wow, that's hard for me.

And the Lord says, endure hardness. Be prepared that it will happen. And hardness will happen. And we have a fight to fight. There will be hardness.

There will be hardness. And we think about hardness. Hardness is talking about those days when we have to undergo affliction. When we have to go through some kind of hardship.

That can be hard, can't it? We all have those moments. You might be on a sickbed for a while. You might have some physical incapacity. You might have some hurt and challenges and disappointments and losses and grief and turmoil and discomfort and inconvenience.

[12 : 23] You might suffer trouble. You might go through some awful things. But let's face it, being a soldier means trenches and foxholes, doesn't it? That's what it means.

That's why they test the soldiers in the training to go through the obstacle courses and they get barked at and they get pushed to their limits because it's part of preparing them that they'll have that endurance factor.

And it means putting yourself out. When you think about it, brothers and sisters, in this army of the Lord that you're part of, and this is not some supposed thing. This is the reality.

You are in the army if you're saved here. But we're all on active duty, aren't we? All of the time. We're on active duty. All of the time against the spiritual forces of evil. You've got an enemy pitted against you. And the fight means enduring hardness. It means the hard yards. It means the long haul. Someone has quipped that it was by perseverance that a snail reached the ark.

[13 : 25] There's a sense where you've just got to keep on. Let's hope that snail had to keep on until it reached the ark. You might feel like you're a little snail. But just keep at it. Be faithful. And you will make it.

And don't limit yourself, too. When we think about our Christian life, we can think, well, who am I? I'm inadequate. You think of all the reasons why that you can't. God says you can.

God says you can. Through his strength, you can do all things in Christ. And so sometimes the greatest of works has come in the hardest of times, in the worst of times.

We could think there's many examples I could cite of worldly examples. For example, when Handel wrote the Hallelujah Chorus, it said that his health and his fortunes had reached the lowest possible ebb.

Handel, this composer of music, it says that his right side had become paralyzed. All his money was gone. He was heavily in debt. He was threatened with imprisonment.

[14 : 23] And Handel was tempted to give up the fight. The odds seemed entirely too great. And yet, it was then, then at his lowest point, that Handel composed his greatest work.

Messiah. Messiah. And there's many other stories we could tell. We think of Pilgrim's Progress. We think of John Bunyan. It was in that cell. In that discomfort of prison.

As he was in prison, simply for preaching the gospel. Because he wasn't part of the established church. That determination. That endurance of Bunyan.

Produced such a glorious work. To the glory of God. And it's what gets us through the times of battle, is that endurance. And so, brothers and sisters, when we think about it tonight, endure hardness.

I'm not telling you that Christian life is all going to be a bed of roses. That it's all going to be comfortable and easy for you. Our Lord says you shall have tribulation. This is war.

[15 : 25] This is war. We should toughen up. And start to get a bit of, a bit of God-blessed thick skins. You know, we need to have a bit of a thicker skin.

That we're not going to get offended over the least little thing. Or some little offence. It's going to shake us and stop us and deter us.

It's been said that the hardest thing about climbing the ladder of success is getting through the crowd at the bottom. You've just got to put your foot on the rung and keep climbing. Be willing to step up.

Be willing to endure and keep on enduring. Unless you try to do something beyond what you've already mastered, you'll never grow. It's doing the things that are hard.

It's a good thing for us, isn't it? Because everything, the first time is hard, isn't it? The first time, and I know there's numbers of us, there's some of our number that are quite new Christians.

[16 : 20] And one of them has been telling me lately how he started to tell others about Jesus. He started to tell others about the gospel. And he's stepped out of his comfort zone.

That's a good thing, isn't it? And even us older ones, we can still be shy, can't we? Even Jimmy can be shy. We can have that moment when it's still hard. It's still hard to tell someone about the gospel. It's still hard to witness. But endure hardness. Be willing to go through that. And get out of the comfort zone. It's always hard. Even when we're going door knocking and there's some experienced door knockers, it's still threatening.

It's still discomforting. It's still scary. It's not like we're going to get necessarily stabbed or anything. But, well, it could happen.

Someone got shot lately or a street preacher. I heard some street preacher got shot. So, look, it can happen. But what's stopping us? Go through the hardness.

[17 : 21] Go through the hardness. Unless you try to do something beyond what you've already mastered, you're never going to grow. So, we can always think, I'm not going to do it.

It's too hard. You've got to go through that and endure hardness. Face it. Stand up to it. Just toughen up and step out and do it. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. It's been said that any dead fish can float downstream. It takes a live fish to swim against the current. We should be the ones going against the flow, shouldn't we? We should be the ones that never give in.

Never give in, as the famous speech of old goes in. Have that endurance, that perseverance. God commends it. There's an old Latin proverb that says, Unless the clay be well pounded, no vessel can be made.

Think about a vessel that's made out of clay. They pound that clay. They get it into that shape. It has to be pounded. That can be too. For us, we need to be malleable. We need to be such that God can shape us in his hand.

[18:19] The potter can shape us in his hand. Let's not struggle with the potter's hand. And think about this idea of faithfulness. Faithfulness. Even the world knows it. The US Marines have the motto, Always faithful.

Always faithful. And one Gulf War Marine wrote home, We're talking about the Marines, not the Boy Scouts. We all joined the service knowing full well what might be expected of us.

And he signed off the letter with the Marine motto, Always faithful. That should be the same for you and me, shouldn't it? As God's people, we should be always faithful.

Is our Christianity cheap or costly? Let's value our salvation. It's been purchased at great price. It's free, yes. But we should value it, shouldn't we?

Value it. Esteem it. Sometimes we do what's easy rather than what's hard.

[19:20] There's a story told about a woman. Her parents were Salvation Army officers. They would go out and do open air preaching and singing and such. And it was a cold night in the Northern Hemisphere, a miserable December night.

It was cold. There was no one around. But she says, My dad said God didn't need people out to be listening. He only needed us to be faithful. So at the time they went out. And you know, this is a thought, as some churches do, they went out and sang some carols.

And the dad gave a short message. And then everyone retreated inside. And a few weeks later, the dad was down at the mall. And a lady asked him, have you been on the street corner two weeks earlier?

And she said, my father had been in a coma for six months. We were dreading the holidays since dad was not really with us. But then we heard the carols. And to our amazement, my father sat up and said, that's God's music.

And with that, he died. What an encouraging proof of God's faithfulness to those who are faithful. And we don't know those little things that we do, those little efforts that we make of passing out a leaflet, of sharing a word, of testifying of the grace of God, and doing it when it's not easy, it's difficult sometimes, as we endure hardness.

[20:35] God will reward you for that. God will reward you that you endure hardness. It's been said that kites rise highest against the wind, not wither. You know, think of the wind. It's the wind that makes the kite fly high.

And it's the same with you and me. The hardness makes us stronger. The hardness makes us fly higher. It can be encouraged in all of these things. When we think about the good soldier, they endure hardness.

There's some scars. Some of you have got battle scars. Battle scars. God knows. God knows the scars that you bear. But be strong. Be faithful.

Be enduring. And be resolved, you could say. In verse 4 here, we can see that the good soldier is to be strong. The good soldier is to be faithful.

The good soldier is to be enduring. And the good soldier is to be resolved. Be resolved. In other words, be one-eyed, if you like. You've got one eye. There's a focus there. There's a purpose there.

[21:33] There's a concentration there about your focus. And what is our focus? We see in verse 4, it reads, No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Now the soldier of Christ has a resolve. We have a purpose. We have a sharp focus. A sharp purpose. A great desire. The good soldier's greatest desire is to please the Lord Jesus Christ, isn't it?

Shouldn't that be the whole life purpose that we have? Shouldn't that be our one purpose for life? To please our Lord? The good soldier wants to please the one who's enlisted him.

To please the one who has chosen him. His commanding officer. He wants to please him. And we think of the one who has enlisted us. We think of the one who has chosen us.

Chosen you to be a soldier. He is the Lord of hosts. He is the captain of our salvation. Our great king and master and Lord.

[22 : 41] Our sovereign. And he is the commander in chief. When you think in a worldly context, when they hear that the boss is coming, everybody smartens up.

I want to make sure that he catches me doing something right. I don't want to be caught on the hop when the boss comes. Well, the boss is coming.

Amen. The king of kings is coming. The lord of lords is coming. The commanding officer is coming. And we don't know when. We don't know when. Are we going to be caught on the hop?

We think, not that we need to pretend that we're working, but we should rather be working all the time, shouldn't we? Because we want to please him. We want to please him. He wants to please the one.

His commanding officer. The commander in chief. Who is it that you want to please? It's a big question, isn't it? Do we focus sometimes?

[23 : 42] I know I can. I'm pleasing myself. I know I should please my wife as well. But, you know, we can please others, but what about pleasing our lord?

Do we please our lord? Do we want him to be pleased? To be pleased with us? Have you this determination to please your commanding officer?

And this commanding officer is not someone that we think, oh, that rat bag, the commanding officer. We might have a bit of disdain to worldly generals and captains and such, but this commanding officer is the one who loves us so, isn't he?

This commanding officer loves us with a love beyond measure, with grace beyond fathoming. This commanding officer is not just in control and command of us, but he is the one who is the lover of our soul.

He is the one who has given his all for us, the one who has poured out his blood, his life for us, the one who loves us with a love beyond description. And this is the commanding officer.

[24 : 48] We don't want to serve him and be found obeying him or pleasing him because we're doing it begrudgingly or because we ought to, but because we want to.

We want to please him. Is that true for you? To please God, to please God, to please him. Are you loyal, sold out for his cause?

We must stand. And when you think about it, I'm told people might want to correct me, our ex-military here tonight, but I've heard it said that in wartime, they wear the uniform all day long. They just take it off and put their pyjamas on. They're allowed to put their pyjamas on. Oh, not. They go to bed with their... Okay, they could go to bed with their uniform on. Who weeks did you keep the same?

All right, you still... Yeah, you don't put your pyjamas on. There you go. Well, there you go. They wear the uniform all day long, all night long. Wow, that's something, isn't it?

[25 : 51] In wartime. Aren't we in wartime? Isn't this wartime? Amen? Amen. Aren't we at war? Aren't we? We should wear the uniform then, shouldn't we?

Wear the uniform. When you think about it, you're a full-time Christian. Amen? You don't just clock off and change to suit yourself. You should please your commanding officer all the time.

All the time. And obey his orders. Think about it. We've got our marching orders here, haven't we?

It's called the Great Commission. It's a commission. It's a command. Go and preach the gospel.

You're my witnesses. That's the commission, isn't it? We've all got the same commission, the Great Commission. I love this quote. Whatever distracts us from Jesus has to go. As the preeminent one, he must be the single focus of our lives.

Of course, we've still got to make bread. We've still got to earn a crust and feed our family and all the practical things of life, of course, too. But that in it all, that he has the centre.

[26 : 54] He has the focus of our life. He has the purpose of what we ultimately do. It's been said, if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything, doesn't it?

How are you going to stand like a soldier would stand? A soldier would stand and stand and keep on standing. I love some of the life resolutions of Jonathan Edwards. One of them says this, resolved.

You can look it up on the internet. There's a whole stack of them. Of resolutions. The resolutions of Jonathan Edwards. It was, you know, it was, what, 200 years ago or something.

And one of them says, resolved. That all men should live for the glory of God. Resolved. Second, that whether others do or not, I will.

I will. Resolved. To live for the glory of God. That should be our great desire, shouldn't it? To please him. Our great commanding officer. His due all honour and glory and esteem and praise.

[28 : 00] The one who loves us so. To please him. We're called to be warriors. Who will brave the fight. We have to press forward. Endure the trials. Endure the hardness.

Whatever it comes our way. Endure the trials. Endure the trials. And. We've got battles to face. And discouragement. Discouragement.

I heard someone say this. Discouragement is faith in the devil. That's a thought, isn't it?

Discouragement is faith in the devil. Don't give him the satisfaction. You know, we shouldn't get discouraged.

I guess humanly we know we can be subject to that. But overcome the discouragement. With courage. With courage. Encourage yourself in the Lord. As a faithful soldier.

Have courage. Walk with God. An old time preacher, J.C. Ryle said this about a zealous Christian. He's one who sees.

[28 : 57] Only sees. One thing. And cares for. One thing. He lives for. One thing. He's swallowed up. In one thing. And that one thing.

Is to please God. I'll say it again. He sees one thing. He cares for one thing. Lives for one thing. Swallowed up with one thing. One thing.

To please God. To please God. We're all going to have struggles and setbacks. Life's like that.

There's going to be things that are going to knock you for six. And make you want to swerve off.

And deter you. And make you even think about backsliding. I've heard of that lately. Of some.

They've been so discouraged. So disheartened. Endure hardness, brother.

Endure hardness, sister. As a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We're all going to have struggles. Yet we will know victory.

[29 : 55] Be a good soldier. So prepare for battle. Daily. Put your armour on. Don't take it off. Wear the uniform. Amen. And don't entangle yourself with the affairs of this life.

It's saying there too. We can get so caught up in the affairs of this life. How to make a living. How to pay the mortgage or the rent. How to make ends meet.

How to get food on the table. And get so obsessed with the nitty gritty. And of course we need to

handle that soon. But not to get entangled with that. Such that that's all that seems to occupy us.

That thinking. But rather what's going to be really important. What's really truly important.

Endurance. Endurance.

It said today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground. You want to be that nut that holds its ground. I mean we're going to be a mighty oak one day. Amen. I love the man David Ring.

[30 : 54] People might have seen his story on internet. He's a preacher in the US. But David Ring is a man who's got cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy.

And he's got this speech impediment. A speech impediment so bad that you can barely understand him. And yet he's one who captures the congregation as he ministers.

And he tells how he was close to his mother. And when she died he had nowhere to turn but to the Lord. And David Ring says this.

They said I would never ride a bike. But I did. They said I would never get married. But I did. I have five kids to prove it. They said I would never preach. But last year I preached 265 times.

I have cerebral palsy but I preach. What's your problem? Have a look. It's really worth a look at David Ring. And it really brings you to tears to hear how God could use a man so limited humanly speaking.

[31 : 58] So inadequate. So humanly lacking. That God could use him in such a wonderful way. And what a testimony. I've got cerebral palsy.

What's your problem? You know sometimes we think that oh what can I do? Well if David Ring can do that. What can you do? What can we do? We think of the good soldier.

And the ultimate example is our Lord himself. He's full of grace and truth. He's so loving. He's so kind. He's so faithful. So true. And he is our great commanding officer.

He endured the cross despising the shame. He's gone and fought the battle. He's won the victory already. And we follow in his tread. And his purpose to please the father. What an example for you and me. Our great commanding officer. He's been through the battle zone. He's been through Calvary's hell. And he's come through in resurrection power. And he says not my will but thine.

[32 : 57] He wanted to please the father. Now bear with me. I'm going to read a poem. Some of you might have heard me say this before. It's a familiar one. Some might have heard it before. But think about these words.

I think there's a lot of truth here. I will be a good soldier. I am a soldier in the army of my God. The Lord Jesus is my commanding officer. The Bible is my code of conduct.

Faith, prayer and the word of God are my weapons. As a good soldier I've been taught by the Holy Spirit. Trained by experience. Tried by adversity and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army. And I've enlisted for eternity. I will either retire from this army at the rapture. Or I will die in the service. I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out of this army.

I am a good soldier. I will be faithful. Reliable, capable, trustworthy, dependable. If my God needs me I will be there. If he needs me to teach children in Sunday school.

[33 : 56] To work with the youth. To help with the seniors. To go to jail. Or just to sit and learn. He can use me. Because I will be there. I am a soldier. I am not a baby.

I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up. No one has to call to remind me, to write me, to visit me, to entice me or lure me.

I am a good soldier. I am not a wimp. I will report to my post of duty. I will salute the king. Obey his orders. Praise and worship his name. And build the church and kingdom.

No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, lollies, cards or give me handouts. I don't need to be cuddled, cradled, babied, cared for or catered to.

I am a soldier. I am committed. I will not allow my feelings to be hurt bad enough to turn me around. I refuse to be discouraged enough to turn me aside.

[34 : 54] I refuse to quit or to be defeated. When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will at least break even. I am a soldier.

I will win. My God will supply all my needs. I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph in the end. I can do all things through Christ.

Demons and devils cannot defeat me. People will not disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot deter me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me.

Governments cannot silence me. Hell can never handle me. I am a soldier. Even death cannot destroy me. Someday my commander in chief shall call me from this battlefield.

He will promote me and advance me to rule with him. I am a soldier in God's army. I shall never surrender to God's foe. By God's help, I shall never turn back.

[35 : 48] I am a soldier, a good soldier, marching heavenwards, claiming souls as I go. I volunteer. I stand here. Will you enlist with me to be a good soldier?

Think of these things that we've talked about tonight. Thou therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Be strong. Be strong. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful man who shall be able to teach others also.

We've got a recruiting role to tell others. We're called to look for faithful men. We're called to be faithful men.

Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We're called to endure, to endure, endure and keep on enduring. No man that wareth and tangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him.

He hath chosen him to be a soldier. Friends, we want to please our Lord, our great commanding officer, don't we? And not entangle ourselves with all of the trappings of this life, of this world, of these things that will pull us away from him.

[37 : 03] We can get so tied up with what the world would capture us with, distract us with, and miss out on seeking Christ, to seek our God, to seek his face, to seek to please him.

What matters?

Thank you for everyone here tonight, those watching. We know that your word tells us that as your army, we will win. We will win. We already have.

We already have the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. We pray each one might be encouraged in the battle zone that is this life, to know that you call, such as we, unworthy, by grace, to be strong in grace.

Lord, we pray there's any here yet to trust you. They will yield to your grace, Lord. They will yield to that overwhelming grace of God. That is the grace that took you in Christ to the cross to pay the full penalty, the foulness of our sin.

[38 : 43] You took it on your body, on the tree. You nailed it there. You paid it. With the strikes of the nails, it was tacked to that cross.

Our very sin in your very flesh, you nailed it. With every strike of the hammer blow, our sin was nailed, nailed, nailed to the cross, Lord.

And we can know that the full penalty of our sin was vented. The full wrath of God against us was paid out such that we that trust you can know your saving power.

Lord, we pray each one here tonight might know, yes, Lord, you died on the cross for my sin, my penalty, my judgment. You took it all that I can be saved.

Lord, I trust you. I trust you. I believe. By faith I receive, Lord, that great salvation gift. Lord, we pray that that might be our heart's cry.

[39 : 43] And for each one, as now saved people, we're entered in, into that army. We don't feel like an army much. We don't seem to look like much of an army much of the time.

Yet, Lord, you call us such. You're the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies, as it were, that we are here reporting for duty, wanting, Lord, above all, we're wanting that we would please you.

Lord, that we would please you. And not because it's an irksome duty thing, not because it's a requirement as such, not because it's an imposed thing.

But, Lord, we gladly want to please you. And, Lord, help us when we fail to, to know your grace.

Lord, as we come, we confess our sins. We know your grace is sufficient such that your grace is greater than all our sin.

Lord, we know our unworthiness is just, sometimes seems more overwhelming than your grace.

And yet, it's not. Your grace overwhelms even our unworthiness, Lord.

[40 : 59] And we thank you that no matter our unworthiness, yet your grace can prevail. Lord, we thank you for your mercy that you would grant that to us.

Lord, help us to realise the great value of Calvary's cross, to realise your great love. That you, our great commanding officer, endured the cross, despising the shame, because you saw the joy, the joy set before, that we can be your saved people here today.

Help us to have that thought as we enter the battlefield, even tonight, Monday morning, through the weeks ahead. We know there's some struggling here.

There's people burdened for family members. There's people hurting. There's people that are, it's hard to even make ends meet. There's things that are tough.

Life's trials and tests. The burdens are heavy. We pray that, Lord, that you might give us grace to endure the hardness, to know, yes, we're on the victory side.

[42 : 04] And we praise you, Lord, that we shall prevail. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.