

A Call to Arms

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[0:00] 2 Timothy 2 is where we are going. A good soldier, a good soldier of Jesus Christ! 2 Timothy 2.

Verse 3 reads, as Paul exhorts young Timothy, a good soldier of Jesus Christ. What is that? A brave, loyal, strong soldier. Let's look at three themes about good soldiers. We're urged to, I put to you three things.

Firstly, constancy. We're urged to constancy. Endure, it says, endure hardness. And this means affliction.

It means hardship and trouble. This is an army fit and ready for tests and trials. We're called to this enlistment.

[1:07] And being a good soldier means constancy. To, in other words, keep going. Keep on keeping on. To go through, through the thick of battle. Through the heat of the fight.

Through the pain barrier. The discomfort. A soldier is willing to sacrifice and suffer. And when they train soldiers, they put them through this arduous testing time of the bootcamp, of recruit course.

And to test them. To make them suffer, really. So they know how to suffer. And keep on persevering. When the fight comes, they'll know how to get through the battle.

They won't turn their back when the fight is on. A good soldier. He's a soldier. He's been trained for this. And toughened for this task.

He's a faithful soldier. This is his calling. And he has constancy. And endure hardness, Paul says to Timothy.

[2:14] This soldier is one who can be depended upon. To take his post. To strive on. To battle on. That's the message for us here. Of this good soldier.

And we're to aspire to be such, aren't we? Each one. Male and female. Young and old. That know the Saviour. We're all called to this enlistment. Into this service.

And this good soldier is one who will not give in. They will not be beaten by obstacles and discomforts. A good soldier is going to endure hardness.

The good soldier will press on in the fight. Are you a good soldier? You're called to be that. Each one that knows the Saviour.

You're called to be that. That soldier. Will you endure hardness? We think really real Christianity is learnt in the school of hard knocks. It's when the rubber hits the road, isn't it?

[3:11] When life gets hard. When you have those testing trials and situations that test your faith. Endurance kicks in.

And you say, yeah, I'm going to keep on keeping on. I'm going to battle on. I'm going to press forward in this fight. I'm going to go through those trials. And I'm going to have that perseverance by the grace of God.

We see in 2 Corinthians 4, it tells how Paul relates. How we're troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We're perplexed, but not in despair.

Persecuted, but not forsaken. Cast down, but not destroyed. So there's an element of trouble here. Troubled on every side. In every dimension, in every direction.

We're troubled, but we're not distressed. Not distressed. We are perplexed, yes. There's perplexities at times. But we're not in despair. We know who's setting the course.

[4:11] We know, as it were, the one who's steering the ship. Even though there's storms about us. We're persecuted, yes. But we're not forsaken. We're not. And we're cast down.

Sometimes we might feel cast down. But we're not destroyed. He'll hold us up. He'll hold us in his hand. And he keeps underneath us his everlasting arms, doesn't he? Don't you know that today?

So testing times teach us to rely, to trust, to know our Saviour's keeping and care. Trouble gives us endurance. Really, isn't it?

I know it's been said, really, the strongest trees are the ones that bear that storm, that have that wind and that testing. At times, it makes that tree stronger for us.

And so, good soldiers here tonight. We're to be engaged in a spiritual war. It tells us, endure, endure.

[5 : 09] The enemy doesn't let up. He really is constant. And we need to be ready for the muddy foxholes and the trenches. Really, it's an unpleasant thing, isn't it?

Not glorifying war because we know oftentimes they're pointless and brutal and savage and a lot of hurt and damage is done. But in this spiritual war that we are in, we have a call to that, to the battle, to the battlefield.

And we're to expect relentless attacks, relentless discomforts. And he's going to help you through that.

He's going to help you endure. God's army is meant to be tough and strong because it's learned endurance. Think of the heroes of the faith that we read of in the Word of God.

They've endured extreme hardship. People like Abraham and Job, they faced huge trials of their faith. Job especially, didn't he?

[6 : 17] Moses was one, fell from the height of power and then was spending 40 years, 40 years on the backside of the desert, tending sheep. And that was just really the beginning, wasn't it, of his testing times he had, the testing people he had to deal with.

And Paul had a serious medical condition, the thorn in the flesh. He had his battles. Timothy struggled with stomach complaints. Charles Spurgeon, a preacher of old, suffered with depression so deep at times that he nearly despaired.

George Whitefield, another preacher of old, lost his only child at four months of age. Trials, testings, endurance. Think of it for yourself.

You might look back and think, wow, I've had a bit of that. I've had my share of that. But yet the Lord has led me. He is leading me. Despite those challenges I've had and the challenges I've yet to face, those setbacks, all of this has really made me stronger.

Through these things I've got stronger. My endurance is more because of that, that I've been through, that God has enabled me through. Are you a good soldier?

[7 : 33] This is the question. Do you endure hardship? Don't shy away from it. If it comes to your pathway, don't shy away because really it's building your faith. It's strengthening you.

Part of the training of the boot camp is to teach instant obedience, isn't it? They really drill the soldiers in the training. I know some of you can relate to it.

Well, I had some time in the Army Reserves as a weekend warrior. And they really put people through the testings, the sergeant majors, the drill instructors, because they want the soldiers to say, yes, sir, whatever it is that they're telling them to do.

That they have that, yes, instant obedience. There's no, oh, is that a good idea or not, what they're just asking me to do? Do I really want to do that? There's none of that.

You know, when you're a soldier, you just say, yes, sir. And that's really how we should be with our Lord, isn't it? Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Instant obedience.

[8 : 44] Wouldn't that be something if we had that spiritually so? When hardship comes, let's accept it as God's good plan for us to make us more like Christ.

So, thou, therefore, endure hardness. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We've seen the constancy, constancy, the faithfulness, that constant nature of the soldier, that they're constant.

Secondly, we see a combat here. It says, thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It reads on, 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.

You, that are enlisted, that have been chosen to be a soldier by your great commanding officer, have that privilege of combat.

Combat. Because the one who's a soldier is one who's going to war. He's going to go to war.

There's a man that warreth, it says. This one means going to war.

[9 : 53] A good soldier of Jesus Christ is a man that warreth. There's combat here. So, secondly, combat. It means that we're going to war. We are at war.

War has been declared. Amen? War was declared in the garden, really. War has been declared. Well, when Satan fell, war was declared.

War has been declared. And as soldiers, as good soldiers here tonight, this war that we're talking about, it's not play fighting. It's not bows and arrows, cowboys and Indians. This is not tin soldiers on the ground play fighting. This is no peacetime war game, as some nations have. It's no practice here.

This is no make-believe. This is no game. No pretend thing. And, of course, we know there's wars raging right now. It's brutal.

[10:51] Savage. Savage. It's horrific what you see. And there's brutality on both sides. I've seen some quite shocking things about what's happening in Ukraine and Russia.

And there's brutality on both sides of the war. And, friends, there's a combat happening. This is warfare. It's real. There's a real battle. It's real war. A real fight.

And there's a real battlefield. We're on the battlefield. We're behind enemy lines right now. This is really occupied territory, isn't it? That we are behind enemy lines because we know the God of this world, small g, he's ruling things right now.

And we can see what... That's why the world's in such a mess. I like to think of that when we're witnessing to people and they say, Oh, how could God allow this? Well, actually, the small g God of this world, that's the one to put the blame on.

It's the sin of man that's caused all the drastic savagery and horror of the world at times. It's the small g God's fault, not our God's fault, because he's going to right all the wrongs when he takes his rightful reign of planet Earth again.

[12:03] But our world is a battlefield. It's in turmoil. There's heartache. There's defeat. Hearts are crying out for answers. Homes are full of fear and despair. There's grief.

There's grief. There's hurt. There's hurting people a stone's throw from here. There's people crying, injured. The damage of drugs and drink.

The violence that goes on behind closed doors. And you see even down at the shops, don't you? You hear some parents cursing their children.

All foul kinds of words. You see the breakdown of our world. We see this heartache everywhere we look. And this is a real battlefield. That's where we're at, people. And there's a real enemy.

And friends, we could say, I kind of say tongue-in-cheek that we could say a lot of good things about the devil. You know, he's a beautiful character. He's beautiful. 2 Corinthians 11, 14 says, And no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel.

[13:06] Oh, how pretty. An angel of light. Shining and brilliant and dazzling. And just takes your breath away to look at Satan. An angel of light.

Surely that must be a good thing. So beautiful a character. And he's powerful too. He can work miracles. He's a miracle worker. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9 tells of Antichrist, Look, he could get behind the pulpit of some churches and declare all his power and signs and lying wonders.

And then we see Revelation 16, 14. It speaks of the spirits of devils working miracles. He's powerful. And he can work miracles. And he has virtually the whole world under his dominion.

In 1 John 5, 19 it says, In part, the whole world lieth in wickedness. It's in his domain, isn't it? And Revelation 12, verse 9 says, That Satan is one who deceiveth the whole world.

So friends, as good soldiers here tonight, we're called to engage in combat. It's a man that warreth. There's a battle on. A battle for the souls of men and women and children. And we are warriors in this battle front.

[14:24] We are called to be battling. We're dispatched behind enemy lines into enemy territory. Sent there to invade, to rescue the souls of men. And this is a good fight of the faith.

Think of the souls that we're called to impart the gospel message to. God helping us to rescue them. To snatch them as brands from the burning.

This is spiritual war. And the whole entire cosmos is in this warfare. And as Christians, the war that we're engaging in, it's a spiritual war. It's a spiritual war.

We aren't fighting over land, but we're battling for the souls of men. Where are the good soldiers? Where are the good soldiers today? Christ is looking for soldiers.

He'll say, Yes, sir. I'm ready. I'm willing. I'm able. Christ is looking for soldiers who will be brave, ready to do battle. Our enemy is ever active.

[15:23] The good Christian soldier knows that, really, the Lord Jesus is greater than any enemy that we will ever face. As it says in 1 John 4, verse 4, Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

You've got the one inside of you who's greater than any power of the enemy. And as a good soldier, we can go through difficult times. There's going to be testings for us, individually, in our homes. Difficulties, physical health troubles, finance, challenges, troubles, relationship troubles, difficult things. But in all of that, in that combat that is our life, we can hang on to God.

We can trust in him. We can stand our ground. We're going to endure hardness. And we're going to be one who wars. We're going to fight the battle until the war is over. So the good soldier is called to constancy, to endure hardness, to combat, the one who wars, and thirdly, to conduct.

It says that the good soldier is one who's going to please the one who's enlisted him for service.

[16:33] It says that we are called to please our commanding officer, really, isn't it? And there's a certain conduct that's required, that's expected of the good soldier.

You know, they say it, even a footy players now, don't they, that they don't have... Their conduct is unbecoming. Even a football player has a certain code, there's a certain expectation that they would act in a decent way.

And even if they do something that's, you know, it makes them look foolish or, you know, damaging other marriages and things like that, if they're unfaithful, or situations where they're caught drinking and acting the full, even a football player can be considered.

Their conduct is unbecoming. And even so, of soldiers, it says that, really, too. And employers. I know where I used to work, they had a code of conduct. And it talks about, for example, integrity. It talks about giving your best. You know this in the public sector, of ensuring that your behaviour meets the required standards. The world sets standards. The world sets expected conduct.

[17:53] Should our standard of conduct as believers, as God's people, be any less, that we would seek to please our commanding officer, that we would be such a good soldier, that, yes, our commanding officer will say, yes, he, she is a good soldier, a good soldier.

Do we meet his expectations? Will it be true of some, of us, that we will be, it says in 1 John 2, 28, ashamed before him at his coming?

Ooh, wouldn't like to be in those shoes. Ashamed before him at his coming. That would be a sad thing, wouldn't it? You think, ooh, I've just really not, not conducted myself like I should have.

I'm saved, but I'm ashamed. I'm ashamed before him at his coming. But good soldiers have a conduct that they're not going to be ashamed about. It's a conduct that God helping them to live, pleasing God, that they'll have a good testimony, a good conduct.

It means being a fighting man, prepared to fight on, resisting the enemy, loyal to the army of God, being dedicated. Soldiers are trained to obey their commanding officers and follow orders.

[19:14] Who is our commanding officer? The Lord Jesus, isn't it? A good soldier of Jesus Christ wants to please him. He's chosen him to be a soldier. This means having the right conduct.

Conduct becoming. Now, military and secular employers use such things as values, as standards, as codes of conduct.

There's one I noticed. It was from the US Air Force. And they called it core values. And we could learn from this, I think.

And there was three that stood out to me. Core values. Integrity first. Doing the right thing when no one is looking. This is the US Air Force.

Integrity first, right? Secondly, service above self. Being a person of uncommon dedication. Service above self.

[20:10] In other words, don't put yourself first, put service first. And thirdly, excellence in all that we do. This is the US Air Force. We could learn from that, couldn't we? To have conduct, becoming a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Integrity, service before self, excellence in all that we do. Sounds a bit like 1 Corinthians 10, 31. That whatsoever you do, whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.

That Christ, and pleasing him, the glory of God, glorifying our Lord, is that which is the ultimate and primary motive for us. That a good soldier seeks to please his commanding officer.

That pleasing my God, pleasing my Lord, is the first and foremost thing that matters to me. That whatever or whoever it is that comes first in our life, that is your God, isn't it?

What is it that comes first in your life? You could, as someone has stated, that whatever that is, that is your God. Put Christ first.

[21 : 15] Let his considerations be the first consideration in your decisions that you make. Pleasing the Lord ought to be the first, the first priority of every child of God.

So no one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life. It talks about this life. You know, as good soldiers, we're living in the real world, this life.

What could that mean? Do we put glorifying our Lord, our great commanding officer, our commander in chief, do we put him first as number one, as the first consideration?

Is he at the top of the list of the things of this life? So often we can be consumed by the things of this life so much that we forget about our spiritual life, our relationship with our Lord.

The things of this life, could it be perhaps things like, you could put your own things down. When I give lists like this, I don't mean to project that any of these things are necessarily wrong.

[22 : 21] But I'm just saying that things of this life can sometimes, they can sometimes overwhelm us such that the things of the spiritual life, we don't put the same emphasis or focus on that we should.

So things of this life could be sports, TV, jobs, possessions, money, attractions, games, entertainment, education, hobbies.

There's many things of this life, isn't there? You could add to that list, I'm sure, with lots and lots of things and we can all have different things and they're not necessarily wrong things. And yet, it can be that some things can take his place when we know we ought not to let them intrude on that.

we hear often sometimes there's situations someone's playing a sport and just they can't get to church. It's a direct conflict situation and you think something's got to give and they just chuck their attendance to church or their job, they just whatever it be.

And we know that's something God's got to touch us in our hearts about. How effective do you think a soldier would be in the middle of a battle if he was daydreaming about something else?

[23 : 48] Things of this life. Things of this life. How long would he last on the front lines if he's distracted? The enemy wants to distract us with the affairs of this life, the things of this life.

Maybe it's wealth, education, social status, success, pleasing ourselves or is it the glory of Christ, the glory of God? That's the primary goal, the first consideration.

Is it spreading the gospel? Is it growing in my walk with God? Is it strengthening my relationship with my Lord? Is it building that fellowship? With other believers?

Or is it other matters that crowd him out? And it can be sometimes the learnings, the money, whatever it be, unless they're used to glorify the Lord, it's a waste of our life, isn't it?

That God has given us. So in the military itself, some behaviour is seen as fitting, proper, suitable, acceptable. It promotes the honour and the good name of the unit, but some conduct may be deemed unbecoming, not acceptable.

[25 : 00] As I say, even football players, for goodness sake, they've got a conduct, and they get, or a cricket player, you name it, they do something wrong and the media just blows it up, doesn't it, and makes their name mud.

God. And so there's conduct that is unbecoming, and it's a serious matter. Paul prays that Christians will walk in conduct that's becoming of their faith in Christ. For example, Colossians 1 verse 10, it tells that we might walk worthy of our Lord, unto all pleasing and being fruitful in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God.

So do we live in a way that's honouring our Lord? Philippians 1 27 is similarly, let your conduct, let your conversation, let it be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1 27. So the Lord wants his army to be an effective, disciplined fighting force, marching forward, into the thick of the fire. Let's stand for Christ at any cost.

So to repeat again, three things, constancy, let's be faithful soldiers, enduring hardness, let's march into the fields of combat, let's fight the good fire, and let's live with conduct that is becoming of our commanding officer, that he's going to be delighted in, and not be entangled, not be entangled in the affairs of this life, such that we're tied down and constrained and hindered.

[26 : 24] We've got to break free from the entanglements. Are you a good soldier of Jesus Christ? Recruits are wanted today. If you've yet to trust Christ, you can join the army by his grace.

There's an invitation extended. You can enlist today if you've yet to trust Christ. No one can be a soldier for the Lord until they first get into the army.

I'm speaking pointlessly to you if you've yet to enlist, as it were, to trust Christ as saviour. So, constancy, combat, and conduct.

Now, I'm going to give you another three points, if you labour with me a little longer, about some good things that the Bible says for you that are believers here tonight. And firstly, there's a good warfare.

There's a good warfare. Paul tells Timothy, this charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war, a good warfare.

[27 : 24] There's a good warfare to wage. A good warfare. Warfare means the waging of war. It's engaging in a war. It's a struggle. Can you imagine being in a war and not realising it?

There's some Christians like that. You're in a war but you don't even realise it. It's like they haven't got a concept of spiritual warfare but actually I'm in the middle of a cosmic conflict and my relationship with God is constantly under attack.

Can you imagine being in a war and not realising it? You'd lose before you even began wouldn't you? We are in a spiritual war.

We are in war right now and Satan is not giving up. He's on the war path and we are at war. We should have that sense that we should be on a war footing in the sense war has been declared. It's on the front page of the advertiser as it were. There's an all out desperate total war and it tells us of our adversary be sober be vigilant because your adversary the devil walk about as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

[28 : 41] So we should be in a state of combat readiness on full alert ready to scramble. I know as a youngster I used to have an interest in some of the world war two planes and some of those type of things and the spitfire pilots would have a readiness to scramble when they heard the signal that they were there just had to put their coats on and their helmets on and they raced out to those spitfires that they had to suddenly take off and to suddenly launch these fighter jets to get into the air and they had to be ready to scramble when the word scramble was issued they had to literally scramble and race to those planes and get into the air and I think we need to have that same kind of state of combat readiness as it were that Satan our adversary the enemy of our souls is constant in his warfare so we need to wage a good warfare and

Satan's trying to steal the word of God from your heart bring doubt to your mind be conscious of that war a good warfare secondly be a good soldier which we've already touched on really being a good soldier is another good thing endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ no man that war entangleth himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier so we're a good soldier that's what God helping you can be a soldier is one who serves in an army you're not fighting as a Rambo kind of a maverick you're not a single soldier you're part of an army that's why church matters that's why fellowship helps that's why we're helping one another as fellow soldiers in this fighting that we're called to and we're no longer civilians when you become a soldier there's a change happens you're no longer a civilian but can you imagine as someone who's entangled with the affairs of this life if you're out there on the battlefield and the bombs are going off and the bullets are flying and you go to there with your mobile phone and you're clinching a business deal it's the affairs of this life as if you could suddenly somehow transact some civilian commercial transaction some business deal while you're out there on the front line it's got a picture there you don't entangle yourself you're actually a soldier and you've got a commitment to your commander he's the captain of our salvation

Hebrews 2 verse 10 it tells of the early disciples that they were men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ they put their necks on the line they hazarded their lives that's that's a good soldier isn't it that we could actually go to the lengths that we would even put our life at risk for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ it could come to that it could come to that I'm telling you tonight and we call to that willingness to hazard even our lives that we're willing to lose everything for the sake of him our saviour and are we one who's a good soldier Alexander the conqueror of old was walking along one day and he was reviewing his troops and he met a negligent soldier he was a kind of slack soldier he was kind of just kicking back and not really being much of a soldier and the emperor asked the man what's your name he said

Alexander and Alexander said to him either change your conduct or change your name he didn't want to have the same name as this slack soldier and you know Christian brother or sister you bear his name you bear the name of your commander in chief you carry the name of your captain so we should have that thought shouldn't we that we would have that heart of his heart that we have that endurance and we need to be drilled trained in the pressure cooker of life be willing to be brave these are days that call for boldness and resolve we're called to bravery there was a one of these

ancient explorers Francisco Pizarro who set out on a voyage for discovery and he had a small band of followers and their object was the conquest of Peru they faced many challenges bad weather short food supplies great misery and it came to a point where he wanted to take the next leg of their journey and he said to his fellow sailors there he drew a line in the sand from east to west and he turned towards the south and he said friends and comrades on that side are toil hunger nakedness the drenching storm desertion and death on this side ease and pleasure there lies

Peru with its riches here lies Panama and its poverty choose each man what best becomes a brave Castilian for my part I go to the south I'm going to step over the line and so staying he stepped over the line this line in the sand and 12 others successively crossed the line they said we're going to stand with you captain we're going to cross the line it's just a worldly example but you can think of it for ourselves spiritually if the Lord Jesus was to draw a line in the sand and say look there's some tough things ahead but I'm going there you would step over the line go with your Lord go with the captain of your salvation and take that decision to step over the line to say yes I want to follow my Lord and even if it mean going into war as it were to war that good warfare to be that good soldier and thirdly we see there's a good fight there's a good fight too it tells us 2 Timothy 4 verse 7 I've fought a good fight I've finished my course

[34 : 48] I have kept the faith we're called to a fight when we think of fighting it's not a pleasant thing is it I can think back to schoolboy days when I got in a few fights and I received and gave a few blood noses but we think fighting is an unpleasant thing isn't it people get hurt there's discomfort there there's people getting bruised and you could get hurt when there's a fight and friends this fight that we're called in is a good fight though it's a fight against the one the enemy of our soul life is a battlefield Ephesians 6 12 talks about a wrestling there's a struggle that can be life sometimes it can be a fighting a struggling a striving it can be an active conflict but the one that we're fighting is is active evil isn't it it's the conflict with evil and so we should not hold back let's step over the line let's not have some reservations let's not just toy with this commitment that he calls us to let's not hold back when he calls us to this fight

Paul tells Timothy I have fought a good fight and we likewise are called to that same good fight it tells us in Jude verse 3 it says Jude writes it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints there's an earnestness there's a contention a contending the church is meant to be a fighting unit I think we've lost our fight people I really do I think the church of God has lost its fight we're wimps whimpering wimpy wussies we should be warriors we should be warriors there's a fight on our hands it's time to get out of this lackadaisical way and to be willing to enter the fray to be willing to be tested and trained our Lord tells us in the book of James it tells us submit to God resist the devil and he will flee from you we're called to a resistance the church should be a resistance movement we see the heroes of the faith a vast army of bible heroes marching through the pages of history Noah built a boat on dry land 126 years he faced the scorning the ridicule the mockery he was despised but Noah pressed on in the fight we see Joseph sold as a slave he could have despaired he could have given up they could have crushed him but one day he became a leader Moses he was set adrift for God hid in the desert but then God gave him the gumption to get and do and be what God had given him the grace to be and so it tells us many that are unnamed in Hebrews 11 that they waxed valiant in fight in other words they became valiant they grew valiant there was a valiant effort a valiant fight and we're called to a valiant fight friends it's a fight that's worth fighting and we should fight the enemy for every inch of ground this is a war zone that's why we care about evangelism that's why we care about reaching people that's why we put energy and resources into mission into reaching our world for Christ that's why we're buying bibles and giving them away that's why we're getting new testaments and giving them away to souls that would be hungry for it and friends there's a fight on our hands now the

Lord Jesus says these words and I've heard it kind of put tongue in cheek as you know for some of us I know some I know Julie I think and some other ladies that I know they have these box of promises have you heard of those little you can get a box of promises where if you want one Julie can make you one it's like a little cardboard box and you've got these rolled up scriptures and you pull them out and it's a bible promise and you can read it to yourself and encourage yourself from these promises in the word of God just little as you select them and randomly pick out a bible verse and it can encourage your heart and someone said kind of tongue in cheek we don't see this one in the box of promises that in the world you shall have tribulation but mind you the second part is a

promise though so you know in Acts 14 it says how you will go through much tribulation to enter the kingdom of God Acts 14 22 but we see this one there is a promise here in the world you shall have tribulation we don't like that part but that's what it says but be of good cheer

I have overcome the world so friends the commanding officer our commander in chief he is with us and he's in the battle as it reads in the word of God it says the Lord is going to fight our battle the battle is the Lord's he's going to fight it for you so we've got a comfort there and in Christ we have safety I like how it's pictured in the story of pilgrim's progress as pilgrim walks through this pathway and there's two roaring lions each side of the pathway and they're straining to devour him to destroy him these two lions and then Christian was told stay in the middle of the path the lions are chained and cannot hurt you if you stay true and it's the same for you and me brothers and sisters that there's these roaring lions the devil is a roaring lion there's all of these stresses and strains of the [40 : 47] Christian life of the battlefield that we're living in but stay true and you'll be safe there's a safety in Christ there's an assurance in Christ he'll hold you he'll keep you safe he'll show you through he'll strengthen you there's a fight a good fight and it's the good fight of your faith someone has said this do not pray for easier lives pray to be stronger men do not pray for easier lives pray to be stronger men let's pray for strength for God's strength we're called to action we see it tells us of the constraining that's going on it says the love of Christ constraineth us in other words it controls us it compels us that's why we want to tell souls about the saviour there's a constraining in this fight fight is strenuous isn't it it's arduous it's straining it's constraining it's been said here's another quote the full armour of God is pretty uncomfortable equipment to wear while sitting in an easy chair now put on the full armour of

God and then go into the battle alright let's enter that conflict zone we've got this call to fight the good fight really life can be like that you can share your own experiences of how tough things have happened for you it's no picnic it is a battle it is a real battle and I know some of you could share more of the battles you've had but you know it's all the grace of God that's seen you through isn't it that you can look back on his keeping his grace and the word of God says ye are strong and the word of God abideth in you and ye have overcome the wicked one here's a good promise the word of God abides in you you've overcome the wicked one and it says through Christ we're more than conquerors so friends tonight I pray you'll be encouraged good soldiers here tonight you'll say yes sir to our Lord you'll say yes sir to your great commanding officer the commander in chief you'll know his keeping his strength his grace his help to live victoriously in this battle zone of life as we called really as the church of God to storm and break through break down the gates of the enemy I like the thought as our Lord has put it that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of God it's the picture there that we are invading we're not in some holy bunker hunkered down hiding in some fortress mentality but we are the ones who are storming down we've got the battering ram and we're bashing into the gates of hell and those gates of hell are going to give way those gates of hell are going to come crashing down it's got that picture that we're meant to be actually actively advancing invading aggressive against the gates of the enemy you could picture that as maybe souls that need Christ of strongholds that should be torn down by his power and so we're commissioned to carry on a fight for the eternal destiny of the souls of men and there's a fight and it's a fight behind enemy lines and so we call to go against the flow we think of a fight again it's this as an investment of energy it's kind of it's going to take some investment of of strength of activity here's another quote driftwood and dead fish float downstream it takes life and activity to swim against the current friends there's a lot of christians that are just drifting along with the current i issue a call to arms today i urge you to join the war effort get militant get militant even if they call you a nutcase get militant for the lord amen it's time to mobilize the army we're meant to be out there actively storming the gates of hell are you prepared for warfare are you ready to invade enemy territory and really that's everywhere we walk his enemy territory right now so we're facing this real and dangerous battle but don't lose your fight don't lose your fight if you've been beaten and knocked down and bruised and injured pick yourself up and get back into the fight the good fight and know that you're under attack but keep on advancing don't let anything dissuade you it's interesting as the word of

God talks about when the enemy shall come it says the enemy shall come in like a flood I think we're seeing a bit of that aren't we I think we're seeing some of that that surging tide you think of flood waters as we've seen on the news broadcast lately and it's a very sad thing indeed to see such flooding because it brings destruction and havoc doesn't it loss the devil is like this flood that's

gushing in he's going to come in like a flood but then it says the spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him so as we close here tonight this coming week is your battlefield yeah every week so let's go forward and gain the victory and know God's overcoming power know that his presence is with you and that you have his full armor and you have that overcoming power the dynamite literally that he gives to you to make you strong to strengthen you to energize you so just to quickly recap good soldiers constancy endure hardness don't let hardness deter you endure it constancy combat you're a man that war there's a war on and you're in it you are a man that war combat and conduct please him please him who's called you to be that soldier please the one who's called you into this privilege to be a soldier there's a good warfare to wage you are the good soldiers and there's a good fight so keep on fighting keep on fighting keep on landing those punches keep on pressing the fight keep on storming the gates of hell let's pray lord we thank you that we can think of this language this language we've used tonight and we could maybe think of it lightly or we can actually think yes this this is the reality this is the reality in my life as we think of loved ones of souls in danger we see lord we can only plead your mercy on our world our lives our city lord we we earnestly ask you lord work in every heart if there's any here tonight or watching that have yet to enlist as it were to say yes sir yes lord if there's any yet to say lord i believe i trust you i pray that they'll say that right here right now tonight i'll say yes lord i trust you for my salvation to forgive my sin to cleanse my heart to save my soul lord and each one as we say that as we have that reality of salvation that will realize the call for everyone that believes is to be a soldier a good soldier a good soldier fighting a good warfare fighting the good fight lord help us to have that heart and know your strength to enable us to do so in jesus name we pray amen