

Soldier On

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[0:00] 2 Timothy 2. My theme here tonight is Soldier On. Soldier On. We're called to be soldiers.

! And I love this scripture here of 2 Timothy 2 verses 3-4. I know looking back, I know there's some that have been in the army cadets.

And for a time I was in the army reserves, a weekend warrior. And I got a lot of enjoyment out of that at the time. And doing the recruit course and putting on the jungle greens.

And just enjoying that kind of camaraderie of the soldier lifestyle. Even though it was only as a weekend warrior. And it brings to mind some of these themes about being a soldier.

And what the Bible speaks about as the soldier, the good soldier. The good soldier of Jesus Christ. And I suppose we're looking here at numbers of different qualities or characteristics of what makes a good soldier.

[1:18] What is a good soldier? And I suppose in work life I've had times where I've been on a selection panel and there's been a criteria. And there's different qualities that we're looking for in the candidate.

And often in such a setting it's more important the character of the person than their knowledge. Because knowledge can be trained, can't it? We can get knowledge through training and learning. But the character, the values are what really is especially important. And so they kind of, the modern thinking is I suppose that it's values based. That you're looking for those values.

You want to see some reflection of those values that you're looking for. We're going to think about some of the values that makes a good soldier. What are the characteristics, the qualities of a good soldier? And I suppose as we read here, a good soldier follows the orders of the commanding officer without hesitation.

What about us? Will we obey our Lord and Saviour in such a way? And there's a call to endurance here. It's talking about enduring hardness or hardship. There's a call to endurance in the face of hardships and challenges.

[2:25] We think about the fight that we're in. We're called to resist the devil. There's a fighting to do. And are you ready for some loss of comfort? Think of the soldier, you know, the real soldier, the full-time soldier.

That really there's a putting aside of their comfort. Going into some place of privation away from their family. Even some time of suffering. Consider what makes a soldier.

So that's what I wanted to reflect on tonight. Even just passing through. Some of those different qualities that we could look. We could list them off really. So there are numbers of them.

So for example, we ought to exercise an alertness to spiritual warfare. We see that, for example, in Ephesians 6 verse 12. It tells us about this wrestling, this struggle, this combat.

It says, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

[3:23] So, of course, we might have times of occasion where there might be friction amongst us as human beings. But really, it's a spiritual thing that we're in.

And a good soldier recognizes that. The true nature of the fight that they're in. And of the enemy that we face. And as God's people, may we be alert to that kind of spiritual warfare that is all around us.

May we understand that our battle is not merely a physical thing with our own circumstances or struggles, but it's a spiritual thing. We've got a spiritual contest happening.

What makes a good soldier? Another one is this need for faithfulness and loyalty. We think of a soldier. We know that as they commit, they sign, they pledge, they make a commitment to

faithfulness, to loyalty.

They swear an oath. They pledge allegiance. And likewise, we think of the loyalty that is due our Lord, our great God and Saviour, the great high commanding officer, the chief commanding officer who is our Lord.

[4:27] And 2 Timothy 2.4, it says, No man that woth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. Again, repeating that verse, 2 Timothy 2.4.

Think of a good soldier remains loyal to their cause. They don't allow the worldly distractions to hinder their commitment. Think of that for yourself as a Christian soldier. Do the worldly things get in the way, the affairs of this life, such that they entangle us, they stop us from fellowshiping? You know, God helping us will help hopefully have a capacity to fellowship. I know there's some folk that I know that they identify with this church, but they're working every Sunday.

Makes it a bit hard to have that kind of faithfulness. Believers are called to remain faithful to Christ, to have that focus. And may we be as faithful soldiers would be.

You know, when we think of it, they don't wear the colours of their country one day and change to the other countries the next. There's a loyalty there. They put on the uniform.

[5:27] They belong to their cause, their service. And likewise for us too. Put on the uniform, don't we? Clothe ourselves with Christ. So may we ever be such faithful soldiers that want to please our Lord and find his purpose and fulfil it in our own lives.

Of course, another thing that matters for us as Christian soldiers, essentially so, is faith. We see that without faith, Hebrews 11 verse 6, But without faith it is impossible to please him.

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Without faith, without that trust in Christ, of course we can't be a soldier if we don't trust Christ as our saviour.

We can't be a soldier in his army. We might make a pretense of it, but we must have faith in Christ to save us and faith to follow, to trust his promises, to please him.

Faith is how? So may we strive to be such good soldiers. Fighting, as it says, the good fight of the faith as we'll come to. In that trust in our Lord, that he is going to enable us for that good fight that we face.

[6:33] The fight that we fight is a good fight. It says, 1 Timothy 6 verse 12, Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

This is the fight of faith. This is the fight. And elsewhere we read about contending earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints. We've got the faith, the word of God, faith in Christ, the saving faith in our saviour.

Be a good soldier and fight the good fight of faith. Another thing, another quality, is an eagerness for God's word. When we think of a soldier, of course they've got their commanding directions, what do they call it?

Their standing orders. You know, that the orders are given by HQ, that they have the orders. They have the battle orders. They have the battle plan. And when we think about it, this is the battle plan, isn't it?

We should have that eagerness for God's word. Oh, how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day. As a good soldier, we want to study and follow our commander's instructions.

[7:39] And follow his word. Meditate on it as we read. Day and night, day and night, to gain that wisdom, that understanding. Of course, we'd be a hopeless soldier in the physical sense if we didn't know what's the commander wanting us to do.

Where's he pointing us to go? What's he wanting us to do today? We want to have his word as the commanding officer's instructions. Another thing about a good soldier is a good soldier is called to discipline.

Now, life can be a spiritual battlefield. It's a battlefield, not a picnic. And the reality is that if we can just kind of gear our minds to the thought, yeah, I am a soldier. I'm actually a soldier.

And this is a battle. And I'm actually on a battlefield. We're not playing church. This is no picnic. There is a spiritual battlefield. There's only spiritual forces in high places like we talked about before.

And, friends, in the reality of it, we all will face opposition. We're going to face opposition even from our own family, our own kinfolk, our own flesh and blood. We're going to face opposition and testing.

[8:39] You know, day by day in the workplace, the workplace is a battlefield too, isn't it, often? And we see in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul talks about this striving, this running this race, this striving for the mastery.

And we see there 1 Corinthians 9, 26, he says that he runs, not as uncertainly. He wants to run, certainly, he wants to run within 10. And he says, so fight I, not as one that beats at the air, not kind of shadow boxing, but he wants to land some punches.

And he says, and he keeps his body under, it says, that sense of getting your body such that it's going God's way. And we see in regular military life, of course, soldiers have got to discipline their bodies for physical fitness.

We've got to get literally fighting fit. And how about spiritually so too? Do we think about that? Are we fighting fit? Maybe we need a better diet, as in hungering, thirsting for the word, wanting to study it, to learn it, to grow, to compare, to let the scripture, interpret scripture, find what the word says and delve deep into it.

Love the word of God. How can we so spiritually grow that we'll have that self-control, that spiritual discipline, that consistency in prayer, that God will help us to grow such we develop spiritual muscles to overcome temptation.

[9:57] Spiritual discipline. When we think of soldiers, think of it as this term, military discipline. You know, there's no token phrase, is it? There's military discipline as they're trained in, as they have those recruit courses, and they have the sergeant barking at them and getting them ship-shaped and their shoes shined and their bed tidy and getting up at some unearthly morning hour to go for a run, no matter whether they feel like it or not.

And such things. There's that sense where they're preparing for war, that there's a spiritual discipline. We think of soldiers, they have to carry heavy weights and go through obstacle courses, you know, with great big knapsacks on or what they call them, you know, the big rucksacks. They go through these long journeys where they're having to run, carrying a heavy rucksack, a knapsack, and they've got to learn to go through obstacles and over terrain and cope with harsh circumstances.

What about spiritually so? Can we handle a little bit of pressure here, a little bit of challenge here, or do we kind of get easily put off?

Are we bats already? Bats already. A good soldier's got that mental toughness. Yeah, I'm going to beat my body. I'm going to get fit and healthy, spiritually fit. Get mentally tough so that I can endure.

[11:20] A discipline is a good thing. Also, self-control, similarly to one of the fruit of the Spirit, is, of course, temperance or self-control. There's that sense of exercising that self-control to resist temptation and live for Christ, that you'll choose to.

And the fruit of the Spirit, it's going to happen because the Spirit will make it happen. It'll be His fruit. We see the fruit of the Spirit. We see He calls us as spiritual, as good soldiers, to exercise forgiveness too.

Forgiveness. Because we should be such that we are close-knit. There's no division amongst us. It says, Colossians 3.13, Forbearing one another.

So that means kind of putting up with each other, I suppose. Put up with me. Forbear with me. In that sense, we're bearing with one another. We're forgiving one another. If any man ever crawled against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.

We think of a good soldier understands that importance of reconciliation. Imagine it. As it is, we are a military fighting unit. The church is a unit, isn't it? We're a unit.

[12:31] A body. And a military unit out on the battlefield, they've got to be on the same page. They've got to have that looking after one

another.

Of course, the Aussie sense of it is mateship, isn't it? That we look after one another. When we're out there on the front line, when we're in the trenches, when we're facing the common foe, we're not arguing and fighting, quarrelling against each other, or not forgiving one another, but rather we've got that precious unity that God wants us to have.

We forgive others as Christ has forgiven us. And we reflect his grace that we have received by showing it to each other. We could consider further, for example, generosity.

Having a generosity of heart. It says, of giving, 2 Corinthians 9, 7, Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give. Not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth they share, forgive.

And we think of the soldier in that sense of the fighting unit. They share their resources with each other. They support one another. They care for each other.

[13:42] And how much more we, as the body of Christ, as the army of God, that we should be generous to one another. And giving willingly and cheerfully. Another quality of the Christian soldier, of course, is we depend upon our Lord.

And that sense of, as in a military sense, they've got to keep in communication with HQ, don't they? They have to keep in constant communication to get orders from headquarters.

And we think of prayer as a light to that for us as godly, good soldiers, of that element of prayer, to arm ourselves with that. It's talked of in the context of the whole armour of God.

It talks about prayer. And it says a prayer in Philippians 4, 6 through 7. Let your requests be made known unto God. Amen. It's a communication link with HQ. Do we manage that?

Or do we let that communication link get broken? The communication link of prayer. I think sometimes it gets broken. We get a little bit static, don't we? That we can't get through. Maybe because we're not trying to.

[14:45] If only we would, we'd have connection with HQ, as it were. So that communication with our commander-in-chief. That we can pray about all situations. We can get his direction.

We can get his leading. We can find his will. We can obey it such that we receive his communication. It's vital. Prayer. We need prayer. And of course it tells us pray without ceasing. To cultivate that prayerfulness. And trusting in God's intervention for us too. As we lean upon him. Why do we pray? We need God. God.

That's why we pray. Because we depend on him, don't we? That should always be so, shouldn't it? As we fight this battle of spiritual dimensions. And of course we know, as I've talked of late, of the weapons of our warfare.

They're not carnal. There's this sense of this battle going on. Even raging in our mind. And there's this need to cast down these things. These high things. That exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.

[15:42] Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. If you don't think of anything else tonight, that verse 5 says it all, doesn't it? Take that one home and write that one down and put it on your fridge.

Bringing into captivity every thought. Every thought to the obedience of Christ. That's saying a lot there, isn't it? Every thought. Every thought would be in his will.

That's what we ought to aspire to, isn't it? Another thing about the good soldier is we need to exercise wisdom. We see, again, following on from prayer, ask of God.

God will give you wisdom. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. That giveth to all men liberally. A good soldier makes wise decisions in the heat of the battle.

Because he's got that wisdom. He's got that. He knows what to do. And as spiritual soldiers in this fight that we have, we need to ask the Lord to enable us to make right decisions.

[16:41] To have discernment. We need wisdom. Sometimes we don't exercise it. I speak for myself. Another thing is courage and boldness. Joshua 1 verse 9, Have not I commanded thee, be strong and of a good courage.

Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. For the Lord thy God is with thee, withersoever thou goest. Joshua is commanded to be courageous. Are we courageous? And it gets tested, doesn't it?

I mean, even in the school place, your younger ones, in the workplace, in the social place, in the family place, sometimes we've got to be bold for our faith. Don't shrink back. Don't be afraid to say, actually, I'm not doing that because I'm a Christian.

I'm a believer. And make those choices. Make that witness. And be that bold witness for Christ. Not be afraid to stand up for your faith. To stand up and be counted. Even in the face of opposition.

A good soldier acts with courage. When you think about it, what's the most important thing? If you are a commanding officer and you're looking for a good soldier, you wouldn't want a soldier who's got courage.

[17:43] Courage. Courage. Courage based on their convictions. Courageous faith. That they're willing to face the giant even. As in the Bible days, when everybody was running, scared about the giants.

Joshua and Caleb said, we're well able to take the land. Even though we're grasshoppers in their sight, we're well able because we trust in God. They had courage. What about you and me?

When we face some challenge, when we enter the thick of the fight, when we stick our head above the trenches, step out of the comfort zone. Courage. We call to courage. Don't be afraid to be courageous.

Another thing is teachability. In Proverbs 9 verse 9, it says, Now, I've got to tell you, I haven't arrived yet.

I haven't arrived yet. I still need instruction. All right? I still need to get wiser. I still need to increase in learning. We never stop growing. Even the world talks about continuous learning, don't they?

[18:45] Continuous learning. I mean, I've got folders and folders of my work days of all the training courses I've done and this and that. And you can never really learn enough.

There's always more to learn, isn't there? There's always more you can learn. You can always grow, can't you? And a good soldier is willing to learn and grow. We never get to a point where, oh, I know it all. I don't need to hear anything.

Actually, I'm interested in learning. I want to increase in learning. And as God's people, as we open to the Word of God, we'll get instruction from Him. The Holy Spirit will give us instruction.

Teachability. It's really important to have that, isn't it? To put aside pride and say, I'm teachable. I'm willing to listen. We have need of discernment too. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

So it's talking about having your senses exercised. You know, get to that stronger meat. You know, that you're willing to chew that steak that you wouldn't have been able to chew as a baby.

[19:49] It's that sense where we grow. We're willing to grow in our discernment such that we start to check things out and work out, is that true or not? And a good soldier possesses keen discernment to distinguish friend from foe.

I remember as a young man, I used to be interested in planes, World War II planes or World War I planes or this or that. And one of the things that I had was actually an old book from World War II days.

And it was a booklet with all of these silhouettes of different planes. People might have seen such a thing. So they had silhouettes of spitfires, of hurricanes, of Messerschmitts and whatnot.

But it was just a silhouette. It was just the outline of the plane. And this was because the AKAC men, as they were firing their anti-aircraft guns in the middle of the night, they could only see the silhouette.

They could only see the shadow of that plane. So they had to discern, is that an enemy plane or is it a friendly plane? And it's the same when you think spiritually so. We need to exercise discernment.

[20:51] What's truth? What's error? What's right? What's wrong? What's of God? What's not of God? To exercise and develop spiritual discernment.

To recognise and choose what is good and what aligns with God's world. Because there's a lot of cons out there. You know, there's a lot of... I know someone was telling me lately about some cult that his mother's been to.

And she's only days away from passing away now. But the cult has finally let him go and see her. And it's a very controlling cult. And likewise, when we were doing door knocking lately, I think

someone was talking about...

I've got a feeling they were talking about, as we heard before, There's some cult that's knocking doors around these areas that believes that Jesus has come back as a Chinese woman or something or other.

There's just wacko stuff. What's it called? Eastern Lightning. Look it up on the internet. If you believe that, you... I mean, I could sell you a bridge, you know.

[21:57] Eastern Lightning. It's just crazy stuff. That Jesus has come back. Our Lord has come back in the person of a living Chinese woman. I mean, you'd think I'd at least be a Chinese man.

He's actually changed his sex. I mean, honestly, this is... We need discernment, don't we, people? We need discernment. May we also realise our need for humility. It talks about humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Humility is a good quality for the Christian soldier. That we recognise our dependence on our commanding officer. We don't just run out into the trenches, into the no-man's land, without him telling us what to do.

We're actually under his direction and his command, that we depend on him. We humble ourselves before our God. Now, sometimes Christians can run off helter-skelter, willy-nilly, doing this or that, because of pride.

And we've all got to watch that. I've got to watch that. So, integrity is another one. The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. So, another good thing.

[23:05] Integrity. Unpack that word. That's huge, isn't it? Integrity. The integrity of the righteous, the upright. A good soldier operates with integrity.

So, we've got that. We should have a moral and ethical code, principles that are high and excellent. May our lives reflect the righteousness of our great God in our actions and decisions.

And there's a certain expectation, for example, in the military, of what they call conduct becoming. And they say, of this man or this woman, oh, their conduct is not becoming of an officer of the Australian Army.

Because they set a high standard for the military. What about you and me? Why don't we have a high standard? Not imposed on us, but a standard we set. Hey, I want to aim for this.

That's the standard. I want to aim higher. I want to be more like Jesus. I want to aim for the highest standard. Because it's not a conduct or a standard that others set for us. But I want to aspire for the best.

[24:04] I want to be the best I can be for my Lord, to aspire to excellence. The soldier of the Lord also has much need of resilience. Resilience, it talks about, Paul talks about having this glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation work of patience, patience, experience, experience, hope, such that the good soldier doesn't shy away from some trials and testing.

It's going to make them stronger. It's going to make them a better soldier. That adversity is going to make you a stronger believer, isn't it? We see that, don't we? Through our own lives, the things that we've gone through, the hard things have been the making of us.

And it's the same for the saints in China and in communist lands. The adversity has made them strong. They're just glowing testimonies. Because of the testing they've been through, there's a resilience factor.

Another thing about the good soldier is we've got hope. And it talks about the God of hope in Romans 15, 13. The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

So we've got a hope, a blessed hope, as we've talked about. There's a hope that we have, the living hope. Talking about the resurrection, the lively hope. And we've got a hope that Christ has given us.

[25:22] He is our hope. He's our refuge and strength. And we can hold on to hope, even in the most pressing and challenging of times. As God's people, we're meant to abound in hope, it says. Abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Friends, we've got a hope that is beyond anything this world can give. Any hope that this world can promise is empty compared to the hope that we have in Christ, that we can trust his promises, his saving grace, and the power and the ultimate victory that we have.

I think as part of being a good soldier, we also need to recognise we're part of an army, and that we support one another. We're not some maverick. We're not just some Rambo.

Not just some soldier that goes out and just does their own thing. We're part of an army. We're part of an army. And I think getting that picture is good. And so we need one another. So we should be, as it talks about, this hospitality here in this verse, distributing to the necessity of saints, looking out for one another.

You know, putting the needs of others before ourselves. Think of that. A good soldier takes care of their comrades. We should care for one another. Don't be selfish. Care for one another.

[26:30] And extend that. Welcome others. And it was great to see this morning we had a newcomer, and people were welcoming her with open hearts. And we think of the fellow believers that are around us.

Take moments of time to get to know one another. You know, how much time does it take just to stay behind an extra five minutes or so, just to shake someone's hand, meet someone new, show that you care, find out about them, ask them their name, for one thing.

I mean, it's getting harder, as we have numbers of ours, that you don't always know the names of others. To care for one another. To show that consideration, that love for one another. Because we have need of unity, too.

In Ephesians 4, Paul talks about endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Think of unity in the sense of a military unit. Again, as the fighting unit.

There's a unity there. As God's army. What about us? We should be maintaining that godly unity. We don't have to all agree with one another on every finer point. We don't have to have...

[27:31] We're not cookie cutters. I don't expect you to believe exactly like me, and I'll throw you out of the church if you don't. But there's that sense where there's a unity. There's a brotherly love.

There's a brotherly spirit. That we're a fighting unit. We're not fighting one another. We've got a common enemy, and it's out there. And we should be working together, building harmony and peace, finding ways we can put aside those minor differences and advance God's kingdom, because we're meant to be a fighting unit.

Friends, we've got to fight to fight, and we're fighting it as a fighting unit. And as God's people, godly unity is so precious. And as part of unity, too, think about that we want to have a good morale.

That's another good thing. Of course, in workplaces, when the morale stinks, you know, you don't even want to be there. You don't want to work there anymore. If the boss is a grouch, or there's a lack of good morale, you don't want to be there.

You'll vote with your feet. But when there's that good spirit, then you want to be there. That's sweet fellowship. That's what we want to engender amongst us.

[28:35] And as part of our unity, we want to have a good morale. Think of an efficient fighting unit, an efficient army, there's a good morale. They care for one another. They look out for one another.

And there's that kind of joy there as well. The sense of there's a positivity. There's a rejoicing amongst us as God's people. That's that quality of joy. And of steadfastness, too.

I know I'm laboring some of these. I'm conscious there's a big list here. But just think of all these qualities. Do we have them? In ourselves, individually, corporately? Can we be such a fighting unit? That we'll be such a people? Talks about here, as I've talked this morning, that steadfastness, that firmness, that unyielding to our commitment. Now, what's it going to take to stop us?

What's it going to take to put us off being a Christian? What's going to stop you being an out-and-out Christian? Or are you just going to kind of crawl under your shell and just retreat and be a quiet Christian?

[29:32] Rather be firm and unyielding, unwavering. I think another really big thing for us, as we're coming closer to the end here, of this sense of being soldiers of our Lord, is that we should have a sense of our mission.

We have a mission. We've been put here for a reason. We have a purpose. As soldiers of our Lord, we see the Great Commission. Some would discount that and say, that's not for this dispensation. Friends, that is for us. Matthew 28. We're meant to be going out. We're meant to be teaching all nations. We're meant to be telling them of the gospel. Friends, a good soldier is actively out there spreading this message of this cause, this mission.

And the mission has been given to us. You are commissioned. I believe every believer is commissioned to share the gospel, to make disciples. And we should be willing to suffer for Christ, to live godly.

It says it'll happen. You shall suffer persecution. What's it going to take to stop you from being a strong Christian? Let it rather make you more determined.

[30:38] May suffering make you more determined to live godly, to take hardship and endure it for the sake of your faith in Christ. And friends, we can be assured there's confidence for us in God's victory.

It tells us that the victory is ahead. He gives us the victory. The context there is a victory over death. Of course, we read elsewhere in 1 John, this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

We've got victory. We're in a fight, but it's already won, really. Christ has done the fighting for us. It's the battle is the Lord's. And the sense is that, really, we've got confidence. There is ultimate triumph for us.

Even though the pressing days of life and we find those days that are irksome, we find days where we're feeling defeated, discouraged, we have victory. We have victory. Thanks be to God, we have victory through Christ.

So take that heart today. Brother, sister, the spiritual battles ahead. Could be when you get home, let alone Monday morning. But we go that there's victory, amen? There's victory for you.

[31:40] And we know that God's protection is for us too, that he has the strength of our life. Of whom shall I be afraid? A good soldier's confident. Think of the commanding officer that you have.

He's not back in HQ, in the leisure chair, you know, watching Netflix. Your commanding officer is standing right with you, right there beside you, right with you in the front line, in the trenches.

You know, this commanding officer, our Lord, is with us. Here's the strength of my life. Jesus is with you wherever you go. Whatever battlefield you've got to face, whatever fight you've got to brave, Jesus is with you.

He never leaves you nor forsakes you. And I was talking with that, with Brother Dave, and he took great heart in that. The Lord is with me. He never leaves me nor forsakes me. And that is true even on your deathbed, even more so, that he never leaves you nor forsakes you.

You can draw upon his strength. Your commanding officer is always with you, looking after you, protecting you, guiding you. We see, we're called to the whole armour of God.

[32:46] Friends, I won't labour some of these points. You know the scriptures in Ephesians 6. You know what it tells you? To put on the whole armour. Sometimes we just put bits and pieces of it on. It says, Ephesians 6.13, put on the whole armour.

The panoply, it's one word, the whole armour of God. Put it on, the whole armour of God. And it's Christ, isn't it? It's Christ, he's our armour. Elsewhere we read, of the armour of light. Really, it's Christ.

He's the armour that we've put on. We've touched on different verses here tonight. You could take time further to go through Ephesians 6. Of course, the various pieces of the armour, your righteousness, we see the gospel, we see the shield of faith, we see those fiery darts, they're going to keep coming, but they're going to be quenched.

We see the helmet of salvation, we see the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. We see prayer, supplication, perseverance. Friends, we can trust our Saviour today.

Friends, we're in a battle, we should soldier on. Don't be deterred. When difficulty comes, when difficulty comes, make you more determined, ever more determined. Let me just quickly recap, if you bear with me, be alert.

[33:59] There's a spiritual warfare. We're called to faithfulness, to loyalty. Yes, sir. As the children's song goes, isn't it? I'm too young to... Yes, sir.

Yes, sir. That's what we want to say, isn't it? Yes, sir. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. I'm at your service. I'm reporting for duty. And we've got that alertness. We've got that faithfulness, that loyalty unto him, that eagerness for his word.

These are the commanding officers' instructions. These are the standing orders. We've got that self-control, such that we'll keep on keeping on. We've got that forgiveness, that generosity, that brotherliness, that prayerfulness for one another.

We've got that wisdom, that we can seek through prayer, that link with our HQ, that resource of our commanding officer who's always ready to take our call.

I know I'm a bit remiss. I keep getting these missed calls from certain people. I'm just not there for my phone. You know, you can't always get through to the pastor, but you can always get through to Jesus. Amen. Isn't that true?

[35:02] He won't put you on hold. He won't say leave a message. You know, amen. Prayerfulness is so important. And courage. Boldness, teachability, humility, integrity, so many things.

Being willing to suffer, being willing to go through the hard yards, being willing to soldier on, willing to soldier on. And having that confidence that God has won the victory.

This is the victory. My faith in Him. Christ is my victory. I've got victory in Him. Let us pray. And as I've been speaking here tonight, I've been addressing really the one who already is sure that they are a soldier in the army of God.

If that's not a sure thing for you, you might say, preacher, I'm not sure that I'm in the army yet. I'm hearing about it. I want to enlist, but I'm not sure how to.

Really, the enlistment procedure is very simple. There's no check on your height, or your intelligence, or your weight, or your aptitude.

[36:13] There's no interview that you've got to get through. You simply have to say, yes, Lord. Yes, Lord, I believe. I trust in you. You died on the cross for my sin.

You rose again from the dead. I want you to be my saviour, to take my sin. I trust you as my Lord to forgive my sin, to be my Lord, my saviour.

By faith, I trust you. And that's all it takes to be a soldier in the army of God. And then that's the beginning of that growing process.

Lord, help us to grow. Help us such that we'll be such firm soldiers. There'll be a resolve in us that we're not going to be deterred or discouraged no matter what. No matter what. We're just going to be ever more bold.

By your grace, not by our own strength. Because we'll fear not. You are with us. We'll trust you. And knowing that our resource is entirely you, because of ourselves, we'll fail every time.

[37:10] Yet, Lord, you are our great resource and strength. And you are the strength of my life. You are my salvation. And we thank you for these things. Pray, Lord, for every family, every heart, every home here tonight, that you would be very present and be glorified, we pray.

In Jesus' name, Amen.