

Fight

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[0:00] Talking about the good fight of the faith. Doesn't always seem good, does it? Sometimes it seems hard and wearisome.

! A hard fight. But it's a good fight. A good fight. There was a man who came to church one day, and the pastor was standing at the door to greet people on the way out after the service.

And he was shaking hands with the worshippers, and he shook this man's hand, and he pulled him aside and he said to the man, You really need to join the army of the Lord. You really need to join the army of the Lord.

And the man replied, I'm already in the army, Pastor. I'm already in the army of the Lord. So the pastor inquired, Then why do I only see you at Christmas and at Easter? And the man whispered back, I'm in the secret service.

He's in the secret service. And let's not be like that. Let's join the army of the Lord and not be ashamed to wear our uniform and to report for roll call and report for duty and get on the battlefield.

[1:09] Amen? So let's go to the Word of God. 1 Timothy 6 verse 11. We'll start there. 1 Timothy 6 verse 11. I know the Bible study group's looking at 1 Timothy, aren't you, Roy?

So it's good stuff. I love 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus. They're a good trio of books, really, aren't they? Very stirring, very meaningful, very relevant.

Paul writes to young Timothy, he says this in verse 11. It's all about things to avoid in the previous verse and such.

And he says this, he says, follow after these things. Chase after these things. Pursue these things, he says. Some things we need to flee. Some things we need to follow. Paul says to Timothy, follow after, he's got a list here.

Fight the good fight of the faith.

[2:25] The Christian life is a fight. It's sometimes an agonising one. Some of you have been through a bit more flack than I have, I'm sure.

Sometimes it's agonising. In fact, the Greek verb translated fight, agonizomai, is the word that we get the word agony from in the English.

Fight. It's got the sense of agony. And in verse 12 there, it says, fight the good fight. There's the noun there.

These words are what we get agonising, agony from. Someone has reckoned you could put it, agonise the good agony of faith. Doesn't sound very appealing, does it? Agonise the good agony. It's agonising sometimes. There's fight. There's hand-to-hand combat. There's face-to-face fight that we're in. There's fight. And it's not just external, but it's internal.

[3:30] That struggle within. That turmoil within at times. As we go to battle against the old man. And keep giving him a good thump here and there and get him under subjection.

There's an inward turmoil and an outward engagement. This conflict that we're engaged in. It speaks of combat. Agony. It speaks of intensity.

Of pain. Of labor. Now some of you women folk know what labor means. I don't really know. I can only imagine. But it's that spiritual struggle, isn't it, here that Paul's talking about.

The agony of spirit. As the agony of our saviour in the garden of Gethsemane. As he agonized there. In that travail of his soul. This fight is outward and it is inward.

A fight of our thoughts and actions. Of fighting the inner man, the old man. And subduing him. And it's saying fight, the good fight. It's present tense.

[4:31] It's something also that we have to continually do. Is the sense here. Fight and keep on fighting. This fight that we're in is bigger than a battle.

This is not a battle. It is a campaign of war. A warfare. So it's an ongoing struggle. Of many fights. Many battles.

It's a campaign of warfare. And Paul tells young Timothy. In a similar verse here. 1 Timothy 1 verse 18. Paul says.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy. According to the prophecies which went before on thee. That by them thou mightest war. A good warfare.

He says. There's words of God. That have been spoken of you. And now we have this word here. In our hands.

[5:28] By the scriptures. By the prophecies. By them. War. A good warfare. There. It's a good fight. And it's a good warfare. It's a lifelong fighting. The Christian walk.

Isn't it? It's a. At times. It's a hard road. At times. It's a journey. And. This is not all plain. Driving. At times. There's speed bumps along that road.

You get those speed bumps. To slow you down every so often. Those challenges that we have. On the journey of the Christian life. As we know. It's not always. Rosie.

Being a Christian. You face some conflict. Some opposition. And. Some setbacks along the road. But this walk. Is a walk. It's a journey. And we keep going forward.

And we have to do battle. Paul tells us here. Tells to. Timothy. To be a faithful. Soldier. Now don't be in the secret service. Be a faithful soldier.

[6:25] A faithful soldier. And it's called the. Good fight. It's a good thing. To fight this fight. It's good for our soul. It's good for the kingdom of God. It accomplishes God's purposes. This is a good fight.

We battle on. Through the dark. And through the storm. Be willing to stand alone. At times. Against the odds. As a Christian. Sometimes. Largely we are.

Let's face it. We're the ultimate minority group. We're absolutely outnumbered. Those who. Are. Professing. Faithful. Strong Christians. In a minority.

And so we need to fight. And stand alone. And fight on. We're fighting. Clothed with spiritual armor. As we follow the direction. Of God's Holy Spirit.

Who shows us the way to go. He is the commanding officer. And we're reporting for duty. Aren't we? And. These various battle fronts. That we face. The battle front of the home. On the home front.

[7:23] There's a battle raging. In the battle front of the home. As we know. It's testing times. We. We've got a. A loved one. Our spouse. We want to see them grow.

And get stronger. Sometimes they're not. We've got to help one another. Stir one another along. Be that godly helper. Of your spouse. And. Children too.

That we bring up. God helping us. We'll bring them up. To know the Lord. That they can trust him personally. And that they can follow him. Individually. But we know that doesn't always happen. And that grieves our hearts.

We can only keep. Battling on. Keep. Being a good godly example. Press the fight. Be a role model. For others.

In your life. In the battle front. Of the home. What about the battle front. Of the mind. We're constantly. Barricaded with. Messages that are. Contrary to God. And I was praying. In the early.

[8:18] Earliest prayer. Here that. The battle. Is going on. For young people's minds. Particularly. The younger generation. There's all kinds of. Social media. And distractions.

And the busyness. That consumes. People's lives. Where God. Just gets a tiny fraction. If that. The battle front. Of the mind. Many battle fronts.

We look at those. Who have gone before us. And can we. Tread. In their stead. Can we follow the footsteps. The revivalists.

And reformers. The men and women. Missionaries of old. Who faithfully stood. For the Christ. And sometimes. Gone to their deaths. A man such as. Jim Elliot. He was a fervent.

Christian missionary. Martyn in Ecuador. Some 40 years ago. And he was asked one day. For his autograph. And what he would do.

[9:11] When he was asked for his autograph. He would write down his favourite text. Thou therefore. Endure hardness. As a good soldier. Of Jesus Christ.

Endure hardness. As a good soldier. Of Jesus Christ. 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 being a soldier. In the Roman army days. Meant a full time commitment. There was no dabling and dabbling.

With other interests. And occupations. That it was a full time. And likewise today. In the military. It's a 24 by 7 job. You can be summoned for duty.

At any hour of the day or night. And you've got to be totally. Unentangled. Disentangled.

Disentangled. As it were. With anything that would hinder. That missionary.

[10:06] That military. Responsibility. And likewise. In the Christian life too. We don't want to entangle ourselves. Get tied up with things. That are going to. Tie us down.

And hinder. Our service for Christ. The noise of the battle. And the victor's song. Were always ringing. In Jim Elliot's ears. And he died.

And a spear to death. On the mission field. In Ecuador. By some. Of the local. Population. As he just went.

To take the gospel. Simply take the gospel to them. And what a ministry. What an example. What a testimony for us. Our battle is. Alike. In that it is ongoing.

And it is day after day. And this battle. This fight. That we're in. This good fight. Of the faith. This fight. That you are part of. It's not basic training. This is not war games.

[11:02] Or some kind of. Just the maneuvers. It's the real thing. It's the real thing. Where the rubber hits the road. And day by day by day. Monday you're in that fight. Tuesday. Wednesday.

Right through the week. We're at the front line. And in the thick of the battle. And this is not just some. Imagine thing. Or some theoretical thing. This is real.

It's real. War. It's the thick of the fight. And the fight we're facing. Is on many fronts. As we face the wiles of the devil. You know. He's wily.

You know. Like a wily fox. He's wily. He's sneaky. He's trying to find some chink in the armor. He's trying to find some way to take you down. And his target sights are always looking.

Where can I find the weak one? Bang. Take them out. Bang. Bang. That's what he wants to do. He wants to take you out. We're faced with principalities and powers.

[11:59] The roaring lion. As it were. The snares of Satan. And the hatred of the world. The world hates you. It hates the gospel. It hates the message.

It hates the saviour. And it hates those who follow him. And it always has. Always will. Until the Lord comes. Of course. Then things will change.

There was an old time preacher called Charles Sinian. He was a faithful soldier. Many years ago. Many centuries.

Certainly. Certainly. Tens and tens of years ago. I'm not sure when it was. But. Okay. And he. He had a. A portrait of a faithful missionary.

In his study. He was a preacher. He had this portrait. Of a faithful missionary. Called Henry Martin. And some. One. One thing that Simeon would say.

[12:55] He would say. Every time I looked. Into that face. It seemed to say to me. Don't trifle. Don't trifle. It was like. There's a seriousness about. The composure of that.

Portrait of that man. And. Brother. Sister. Don't trifle. Don't trifle. There is a battle on. A war. In my soul.

And for my soul. And we are part of that. Battle. And. People here today. You're saying. Yes. I know. You're telling me. I know how it is. It's happening right now.

I'm in a battle. I'm struggling with some things. There's some giants I'm faced with. Being like David. He ran towards the giant. He faced that giant. On the battlefield.

And he was saying. You know. How. How dare this. Uncircumcised. Philistine. Mock the people of God. Mock the almighty God. I'm going to take him out. I'm going to take him out.

[13:50] By the spirit of God. By the power of God. In the name of. My God. And he stood up for the Lord. Young David. Against all the others. Armed. By faith. And courage.

And five. Little. Stones. In a sling. Honestly. But God. Made all the difference. And so too for you. We've got an enemy. To overcome.

We have to. Do battle. Do battle. So. Brother. Sister. Don't think it's strange. That you're fighting sometimes. Because we told to. We commanded to fight.

It's a command for us. And Peter. Likewise commands. He says. Be sober. Hey. No trifling here. Be sober.

Wise up. Think straight. Get your head. Firmly. In. In the. Gear here. That. You need to be sober. There's no time for.

[14:44] Being. Drunk. Be sober. Be vigilant. He says. Have your eyes peeled. Be watching. Watchful. Why?

Because your adversary. The devil. As a roaring lion. Is walking about. Seeking whom. He made about. He's constantly on the prowl.

On the war path. As a roaring lion. You know. I like to say. There's some good things about the devil. He's busy. Being busy. But he's busy about the wrong things. So don't follow his example please.

But. But. Be active still. And it tells us. Who resists steadfast in the faith. Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished. In your brethren. That are in the world. Peter says.

Resist him. And join the resistance. Amen. That's what we need to do. Like back in France. When the. Land was overtaken. By Nazi Germany.

[15:40] People. Join the resistance. Join the resistance. Don't stop fighting. Even. When it feels like you're overtaken. Join the resistance. Keep resisting. You know.

Being like that. Magnet. That just. Repels. When you turn it that way. And it repels. It resists. It. It. Presses. Away from.

It resists. It. Opposes. We need to be. Oppositional. With that which is contrary to God. Don't be afraid to stand up. And oppose. That which is against God.

Be a resistor. Don't just be. If somebody succumbs. And just lets. I'll just go with the flow. I'll just follow the crowd. Be a resistor. Be resistant. The fight that we're in.

Is called a good fight. A good fight. Why is it called good? To fight. Why is it a good thing? It's a good thing. Because we're on the winning side. Amen. And our cause is good.

[16:37] The cause. That we have. Is the cause of truth. Is the greatest cause. Is there not a cause? This is the greatest cause. You might think. Well. I'll save the dolphins.

That's a good cause. Or. You might think. What's some other things? People might have some good causes. I'll save the children. Or this or that. You might have some.

Particular. Meaningful. Things. That you think. That's a good cause. This is the good cause. This is the greatest cause. The greatest cause.

The gospel cause. This is God's. Work. This is the greatest cause. It's the cause of truth. The cause of righteousness. The cause of salvation.

So our cause is good. The one who we serve and follow is good. He's the greatest. He is the greatest. Not Muhammad Ali. Jesus is the greatest. And he is greatest truly.

[17:31] He is the captain of our salvation. It says in Hebrews 2. Verse 10. The one that we serve is good. And he's filled us with good armor. The best armor.

Perfect armor. The whole armor of God. It's perfectly fitting for us. And protecting of us. And he's made abundant provisions for us. He is our source of supply.

And our strength. But my God. Shall supply all your need. According to his riches in glory. By Christ Jesus. That abundant store of riches.

That is in glory. He can supply from that great treasure trove. That great treasure store. To all your need. Not necessarily a wants. But what you truly need.

He will supply. He promises that. And the victory is sure. That's another good thing. About this good fight. Is that the victory is sure. It is assured.

[18:25] Because Christ our Lord. Has already overcome. We're just waiting for the final. A little flag of surrender. To wave. At the ultimate end.

And when our enemy. Surrenders. And so. 2 Timothy 4. Verse 6. Paul writes. At the close of his life. And here he is writing for a prison cell.

He says. I know that. I'm ready. He says. I'm ready. You know. When I. I know I spoke with Jim. At. One of the last days with Jim.

And he's. He was saying. I'm ready. I'm ready. He knew where he was going. He knew his maker. He knew his saviour. And he was ready. He was ready. And he's with. The Lord now.

And Paul says. I am now ready. I'm ready. Just waiting for. That moment. When he says. It's time. He says. I am now ready. To be offered.

[19:24] And the time of my departure. Is at hand. Here he is. In really death row. In the prison cell. Away to the executor. The execution. And he says.

He says. I have fought. A good fight. I have finished my course. That race that I've been running. This race course. I'm about to cross that finishing line. He says. I've finished my course.

I can see the finishing tape there. I'm about to break through it. He says. I've kept the faith. Henceforth. There is laid up for me.

A crown of righteousness. Which the Lord. The righteous judge. Shall give me at that day. And not to me only. But unto all them. Also. That love. Is appearing.

It's got the sense here. Of that crown. That. The winner's wreath. That was planted on the. On the head. Of the. One completing. The race. And for the meanwhile.

[20:22] The Christian life. Is a battle. It is a race. It is a fight. It is a fight. Against the world. The flesh. And the devil. And this battle rages on.

For the meanwhile. We have some fighting to do. Brother. Sister. There's more fighting yet. Do not weary. In well doing. While the battle rages.

We still have a song. And deep joy. Because our captain. Has furnished us. With all that we need. He's furnished us. With his personal communication.

For how we are to do battle. He's given us. The. The general orders. He's given us. The commanding orders. Here. His instructions.

For this fight. This battle manual. That he's given to us. Are we obedient. To our captain's commands. Are we loyal. To our commanding officer.

[21:17] Does he have. Our devotion. Do we obey his orders. Have that heart. Yes sir. Yes Lord. It says. Let the word of Christ.

Dwell in you richly. Let it dwell in you richly. Now let's not take this. Casually. Let's dwell in it. Richly. Let it dwell in you. Richly.

And in all wisdom. This is how we get wise. The fear of the Lord. Isn't it. It's the fear of God. That is true wisdom. The beginning and the end of it. It's wisdom.

Comes from God. And it says. Teaching and admonishing one another. In psalms and hymns. And spiritual songs. Singing with grace. In your hearts to the Lord. Come and sing together.

Come and worship together. There's strength there. Even in the midst of this cosmic conflict. That we're warring in. We've got a certain peace. A sure peace. And our commanding officer.

[22:11] Arms us. With all that we need. To do battle. Everything that we have need of. And he will help you. To manage that flack. Of battle. The strife.

The hardship. That we face. It tells us in the word of God. That thou will keep him. In perfect peace. Whose mind is stayed on thee. Because he trusteth in thee. Even this fight. In this battle zone.

Things kind of flying here and there.

This noise of battle. This turmoil. This chaos. The agony. The anxiety.

The stress. Of the battle zone. Even there. We have perfect peace. Perfect. Perfect. Peace.

[23:03] It's peace. That is perfected. It's peace. That is absolute. Shalom. Shalom. Perfect. Peace. The peace of God. And for this present time.

We battle with a cunning foe. But we need not be afraid. He will try every trick in the book and out of the book. And sometimes he'll use deception and smoke screens.

And all kinds of sneaky ways. And sometimes even in churches too. A good church can fall prey to these tricks of the enemy.

And it's like he puts on a kind of stealth mode. You know. A kind of stealth mode. He kind of acts. So you can't recognize it always.

What he's up to. And if I could picture it. I'm using really a non-biblical parable. where we see this happened with the city of Troy.

[24:12] Some will fall for the devil's ploys. A light to the Trojan horse. That tricked the ancient city of Troy. And according to Homer's Iliad. The Greeks besieged the city of Troy.

For ten years without success. So the residents of Troy. Were holed up in their city. Behind their walls. They were safe.

But the enemy was constantly. Trying to attack them from outside. For many years. Ten years. But without success. And after the death of the warrior Achilles.

Many wanted to give up the fight. But the king Odysseus. Came up with a plan. To get the Greek army into Troy. And Odysseus. The king.

Built an immense wooden horse. He and his warriors hid inside it. This massive structure. This massive wooden horse. Was built.

[25:09] And after leaving the horse at the gates of Troy. It was on some kind of wheels. The Greek army sailed away. And so the Trojans. Inside the city of Troy.

They thought that the Greeks had given up. And they'd left this horse as some kind of gift. And they brought it inside the gates. As they wheeled it in. Into the city. And had it inside the city.

And that night. While the Trojans were sleeping. The Greek ships secretly. Quietly returned. To shore. In the cover of darkness. And the soldiers inside the horse.

Slipped out. And opened the city gates. And the Greek army. Quietly entered the city of Troy. And started. Fires. All over the city. And the Trojans awoke.

To find their city in flames. And as they tried to flee. They were killed by the waiting Greeks. And the story of the Trojan horse. And the fall of Troy. Has come to represent the subversion.

[26:06] Of anything. From within. A subversion from within. It's another trick of the enemy. And that's what's happening. I put to you. As I see it. At times.

In some churches today. Where they're falling for things. They're falling for compromise. And they overrun. And spiritually. They fall prey to the enemy. And sometimes. It happens in.

Subtle. Little ways. Bit by bit. Where. Oh. It's just a little change. Just a little bit of this. And a little bit of that. And before.

You know it. It's all over. Red Rover. They fall prey to the enemy. It's a kind of parable here. Of course. It's not a biblical parable. But it's just to demonstrate. One of the strategies.

I put to you. That the enemy. Who is against us. Can use. That he can come in. And gradually. Try to. Infiltrate. And overtake. And the subterfuge.

[27:00] The kind of. Hidden ways. That. And we can be. Easily. Tricked. By this kind of compromise. With the enemy. And really.

Like in war times. We know. You don't fraternize. With the enemy. It's like. What's his name. The. The former. English. Prime Minister. When he got. Hitler. Got him to sign. A peace. Chamberlain. Yeah. He said. Peace in our times. I've got it.

I've got it. He's put it in writing. I believe. Mr. Hitler. And of course. It was all just a big trick. And that's what the enemy. He wants to do. Doesn't he? He wants us to.

He wants to trick us. And he wants us to think. That. We don't have. That. We don't have to be on our guard. But we do. We do have to be on our guard.

[27:55] Because we have. A cunning. Committed enemy. And sometimes. He traps and snares people. As you hear about people. Joining particular groups. That have got a cultic.

Bent. Oh. It sounds like they're Christian. No. They've got this and that. But. When you actually. Look deeply enough.

You can see. Actually. They're. Quite off track. They're preaching a works based salvation. They're preaching a. A message. Of condemnation. And legalism.

Or. Or condemnation. And. And putting people on burdens of guilt. And. And. Putting people. In. Yokes of bondage.

So do not compromise with the enemy. Do not fraternize with the enemy. And as a church. We've always got to be wising up. You know. Watch me. Make sure I'm keeping. On the straight and narrow. Let's.

[28:54] Let's stir one another. Encourage one another. Provoke one another. Because none of us. Is. Immune to. Room for improvement. Let's encourage one another.

And. You know. When. When you might get that kind of correction. Lovingly given. Receive it for what it's meant to be. Lovingly. Given. Neither give place to the devil.

We read. Don't give the devil an inch. Don't give him a foothold. And be prepared. And be aware that your enemy. Is always. Roaming around. Like a roaring lion.

One. We see that Jude 1. It tells us. It was needful for me. To write unto you. Says Jude. I gave all diligence. To write unto you. He said. It was needful.

Me to write unto you. And exhort you. That you should earnestly. Contend for the faith. Which was once delivered. Unto the saints. Now. Of course. Contention. Is a bad thing.

[29:52] But this is a good kind of contention. This is a good kind of contention. We need to be. Contending. Earnestly. For the faith. So we've got some contending to do.

We're told to be contentious. In this way. To contend for the faith. For the faith. For the gospel. For the gospel truth. In defense of the gospel.

And against falsehood and error. Don't be afraid to. Call it. When you see something that is error. And false. Because we've got to speak the truth.

Get ready for battle. Because it's a warfare. And it's a constant battle. And the greatest battlefield. Is the human heart. Here is where.

We can know. Truly. A personal victory. Don't give up. Let's not shoot the wounded either. There's people suffering. You know.

[30:50] We need to be a church that lifts people up. And gets people back on. On their feet again. And comes alongside. And administers first aid. You know.

Let's be a church that cares for one another. Because there's many wounded soldiers. Keep on fighting. We're empowered to be light and salt in this world. We've got work to do.

And it tells us that the armor that we wear. Is called the armor of light. We read that in Romans 13. Paul says the night is far spent. The day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness. And let us put on the armor of light. It's also called the armor of righteousness. The armor of righteousness. In 2 Corinthians 6 verse 7. It tells us.

By the word of truth. By the power of God. By the armor of righteousness. On the right hand. And on the left. The armor of light. The armor of righteousness.

[31:47] The whole armor of God. Our Lord calls us to be like himself. He is the light. He is the light of the world. And. What is the righteousness that we need? His.

His righteousness. I know there's some. Churches that. Falsely teach. Sinless perfection. Sinless perfection. Now. We can aspire to that.

And we will have that. One day. But for the meantime. We've got vessels of clay. We've got vessels. Of flesh. And I think. If someone was.

So minded. That they thought. I've arrived. I'm sinlessly perfect. Well they'd be guilty of their sin of pride. Because. Let's face it. That we have to have that humility.

Before the Lord. I'm not downgrading. That aspiration. That we should have. To be perfect. To aspire to be righteous. To aspire to be. Holy. As he is holy.

[32:44] As we commanded to. Aspire. Yet. I believe that. That perfect righteousness. Will only be. At. That day. We see him.

Face to face. When he's transformed us. When he's glorified us. To such an extent. That he's changed us. He's transformed us. Into his own likeness. And. Thank God.

For the meantime. The righteousness. That he exhorts us to. Is a righteousness. That he gives to us. It's a righteousness. That he gives to you. He clothes us. With the armor. Elsewhere.

We read. Of the robes. Of righteousness. That. It's his righteousness. His righteousness. And. I just. Plea. My plea. To you. Is that. I've heard.

Occasion. Of late. Of. Certain churches. That teach sinless perfection. And put people under. A burden. That is. Impossible. To carry. It's impossible.

[33:40] Such that. Okay. You're not a Christian. Because you've got this sin. In your life. Whatever it is. Well. Honestly. That's. That is.

A yoke of bondage. That is. That is like the Pharisees. Loading someone up. With a. With an expectation. That is. Unattainable.

Yet. We seek his righteousness. And we can know that. By faith. As he clothes us. As he cloaks us. As he covers us.

As he enrobes us. With himself. To know his righteousness. That is what we can. Certainly know. And we can be a good soldier. In this fight. A good soldier.

Of Jesus Christ. And. Our Lord calls us to be. Like himself. So we can be a good soldier. And he tells us here. As he tells Timothy here. Thou therefore. He says.

[34:33] I'm giving you a charge here. Timothy. He's telling you. Hey. Listen up you. Endure hardness. He says. Endure it. Put up with it.

Keep going. Keep enduring. Keep persevering. Hardness. It's going to be hard. There's going to be some hardness. There's going to be some hard things.

Endure it. Persevere in it. As a good soldier. Of Jesus Christ. No man that warth and tangleth himself. With the affairs of this life. That he may please him.

Who hath chosen him. To be a soldier. Thank God. He has chosen you. To be a soldier. Amen. I like to think. Wow. It's almost like. You know.

In schoolyard days. When. You're lined up there. For the captain to pick this team. And he said. I want you. On my team. That's what Jesus says. Isn't it? I want you.

[35:30] You. You. Come and join my team. Come and join my army. He has chosen us. Chosen you. To be a soldier. Wow. Yes sir. Reporting for duty.

That's what I want to be. A willing soldier. And. We've got a. Good captain. He's a good captain. Now I like.

I know. Where I work. I particularly got a respect. For my current boss. And he's leaving in two weeks. We've got to really miss him. Because as much as he's.

He's got his faults. He's a good boss. And it's nice to have a good captain. And the captain that we have. Is the greatest. Isn't he? And he has chosen you.

Don't you want to please him? To please your captain. To please him. To please God. To be not a man pleaser. But one who wants to please God.

[36:24] Let that be your heart's ambition. Let that be. What drives you. What. What. What motivates you. What. What stirs you to action.

I want to please God with my life. I want to please him. That is my first and foremost consideration. In every choice of life that I make. For the meantime there's a hardness to face.

And Paul says. In the lead up to this verse here. Be strong in the grace. That is in Christ Jesus. The true measure of a person.

Is the strength of their character. Isn't it? In that strength. Of your character. And our strength. Doesn't come from within. You know like the self-help motivational gurus.

Unleash the power within. Unleash the power within. No. It doesn't come from within. Comes from him. From him. Unleash the power from him. In your life. Our strength comes from on high.

[37:22] It comes from on high. Power from on high. Power from our Lord. Do we want to please him? This is an oft-repeated truth of scripture. That God is our strength.

Wow. I'm glad of that aren't you? It's not me. It's not this poor weak vessel that is me. It is his strength. That I need. And day by day. And there's many scriptures that use this phrase.

That God is my strength. God is my strength. The Lord is my strength. And my shield. My heart trusted in him. And I am helped.

Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth. And with my song will I praise him. The Lord is my strength. Do you know him?

That God is your strength. When you're feeling weak. Worn down. When it's hard going. When there's hardness. You've got a strength. Beyond your own. A superhuman.

[38:22] A supernatural. A God-granted strength. Because God. Is your strength. Himself. And there's some things we have to counter and combat.

For though we walk in the flesh. We do not walk after the flesh. This is not some fleshly thing. By your own effort and strength. Oh I'm going to try to hang on. I'm going to try to be good. I'm going to try. Try. Try. Really. Really hard. It's not a fighting. Of your fleshly effort. To be a Christian. It's his grace.

From beginning to end. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. These weapons we fight with are not some fleshly. Man made thing. It's not man generated. Man constructed. It's mighty through God. Our strength is through God. From God. Through God. Our God.

[39:20] So the pulling down of strongholds. You face some strongholds. The strongholds. There's these walls. These barriers. These embankments. These fortresses. Of evil.

God's calling you. Pull them down. Brick by brick by brick. Pull them down. Tear them down. Demolish them. He's called us to the work of demolition. Of such things.

Casting down. Imagine. Imaginations. And every high thing. That exalted itself. Against the knowledge of God. And bringing into captivity. Every thought. To the obedience of Christ. Strongholds. High things. Against the knowledge of God. Evolution. All kinds of things out there. Isn't there? Things that people use.

To stay in unbelief. It snares people. I've seen that sadly. To some loved ones. In my life. Where the snares. They're ensnared by these.

[40:20] Evil things. Evolution. Evil things. Anything to stop people. From putting their trust in God. Believing his truth.

Finding his favour. His salvation. Trusting him. Simply. To save their soul. Strongholds. Strongholds.

Legalism can be a stronghold. Where. It's just unattainable. I'm not even going to try. It's too hard. It's too hard. It's too hard for me to be a Christian. Because there's too many expectations. From other Christians.

Well actually. It's his expectation that matters. And he expects you to put your trust in him. To rely on him to help. To save you. To trust in him.

Sometimes Christians can be their worst. The worst example. You know sadly isn't it. People look at Christians and it puts them off Christianity.

[41:21] That's a sad thing isn't it. Let's pull down the strongholds. Let's pull down anything. That's going to stop anyone. From putting their trust in Christ. Let's fight.

Fight against sin. There was a man. An old man who lived long ago. And he. Expressed how he was struggling.

In his life. Struggling to carry on. And a friend asked him. The cause of his struggles. And he said this. Alas. I have every day so much to do.

I have two falcons to tame. Two hares to keep running from. Away. Two hawks to manage. A serpent to confine. A lion to chain. And a sick man to tend and wait upon.

And why? Said the other friend. Why this is only folly. No man has all these things to do at once. He said. Yes indeed. It is with me. As I have said. The two falcons are my two eyes.

[42:19] Which I must diligently guard. Lest something should please them. Which may hinder my walk. There's two hares to my feet. My two feet. I've got to hold them back. Lest they run after evil.

And walk in the ways of sin. The two hawks are my two hands. Which I must train. And keep to work. In order that I may be able to provide for myself. And for my brethren who are in need.

And the serpent is my tongue. I must always keep it in the bridle. Lest I should say something unseemly. And the lion is my heart. With which I have to maintain a continual fight.

In order that its vanity and pride may not fill it. But the grace of God may dwell and work therein. And the sick man is my own body. Which I'm ever watching. With watchfulness and care.

As all this daily wears out my strength. And the friend said. Dear brother. If all men labored and struggled. After this manner. The times would be better.

[43:17] And more according to the will of God. And it's just continuing that continual fight. The eyes. The hands. The mind. The heart. The will. The tongue. Fight.

The good fight. It covers all. Of who you are. Your whole person. Because this frail body. Is getting frailer. As we know. And daily. Our strength.

Grows less. But let's use what we have. The energy. And capacity that we have. Let's use it for his glory. While we have that strength. Use it for him. And Paul knew what he was talking about. As he talks about the struggle. He says. No man stood with me. Here he was in prison. Everyone had kind of left him. He says. All men forsook me. You know.

You might feel. I'm abandoned. I'm all alone. And you feel like sometimes. In our church circles. Where our numbers are. A dwindle. Somewhat. At times. You think. Oh.

[44:11] Where is everyone? All men forsook me. All men forsook me. But then he goes on. But the Lord stood with me. The Lord stood with me.

The Lord stood with me. And he strengthened me. That by me. The preaching might be fully known. And that all the Gentiles. Might hear. And I was delivered. Out of the mouth of the lion.

And the Lord shall deliver me. From every evil work. And will preserve me unseen. His heavenly kingdom. So he'll be glory. Forever and ever. Amen. He says. The Lord delivered me.

From the mouth of the lion. No man stood with me. But the Lord stood with me. The Lord stood with me. You might feel that brother. Sister. You might think. Preacher. I'm feeling like. I'm all on my own. I'm all on lonesome.

I'm all alone. Everyone's abandoned me. I've not got much. Encouragement. From others. The Lord stands with you. He's never left you. And he's never forsaken you.

[45:08] And he never will. He never will. Fight the good fight. Fight. Notice it's a command. A command. It's a charge. This doesn't say.

Fight if you feel like it. Fight if you feel like you're in the mood. Fight if you feel. Like you're able. Fight. Fight. Fight.

It's a command. One might paraphrase it. As a charge. In a sense of it here. As we have it. From the Greek. It's.

Essentially it's saying. Keep on. Keeping on. In the spiritual struggle. It's got a sense of keep fighting. Keep on fighting. Keep on. It's a habit.

Make it a habit. That you will fight. Don't slacken. To think. Oh. I'll fight. Today. But tomorrow. I'm not. Just to have a day off. Fighting. No.

[46:02] It's a day by day. It's a day after day. It's a fight. It's a habit. Day in. Day out. Keep on fighting. That's the picture. That's the sense of it here. And Paul says.

To Timothy again. He says. Lay hold. On eternal life. Fight the good fight of the faith. And he says. Lay hold. On eternal life. He says. Grab hold of that.

Grab hold of eternal life. It's a sense of. Get a hold of that. Embrace that. Get a good grip on that. Seize it. It's the same word that. Our Lord.

Is. Spoken of. Us using. When Peter walked on the water. And. He started to sing. Glug. Glug. Glug. Glug. And immediately. Jesus stretched forth his hand.

And caught him. And said unto him. O thou of little faith. Wherefore didst thou doubt. Peter started to doubt. As he. Walked on the water. And then. Started to look at the waves.

[47:00] And. Oh. It's a bit scary now. And Jesus. Grabbed him. Paul's saying. Grab a hold. Of eternal life.

But Jesus. Grab a hold of Peter. He caught him. He caught him. Lay hold. On eternal life. If you're not saved.

I urge you. Lay hold. On eternal life. Lay hold. On eternal life. And what that means is.

Trust. That Jesus died for your sin. That he. Can be your Lord and Savior. As you simply trust. What he has done for you. Believe him.

Receive him. Embrace him. As your Lord and master. And as your commanding officer. Let me close with this. Little saying.

[47:59] I think I have. Used this before. And it's a bit lengthy. But it captures. The point. Here. That. I like to think.

As they have in the military. They have recruitment officers. And. I'd like to think that. If you've yet to be. If you've yet to enlist. That this will encourage you to enlist.

In the army of God. Not the secret service. But the army of God. Join the army of God. And if you have yet to enlist. I urge you. Sign up now.

Sign up now. And this is not being a weekend warrior either. This isn't just. Part time. This isn't just the army reserves. It's. Full. Full time. To be a full time soldier.

And. This is what this. Manus written. It's by an unknown author. It says. I am a soldier. I am a soldier. In the army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my.

[49:01] Commanding officer. The Holy Bible. Is my code of conduct. Faith. Prayer. And the word. Are my weapons of warfare. I have 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 am enlisted for eternity. They're not conscripts. They're volunteers.

I will either retire in this army. At the end of time. Or die in it. But I will not get out. Sell out. Be talked out. Or pushed out.

I am faithful. Reliable. Capable. And dependable. If my God needs me. I am there. If he needs me to teach a class.

To teach my. To reach my neighbour. To help someone in need. Or just to sit and learn. He can use me. Because. I am there. I am a soldier. I am not a baby.

[49:55] I do not need to be pampered. Petted. Primed up. Picked up. Pumped up. Or pepped up. I am a soldier. No one has to call me.

Remind me. Write me. Visit me. Entice me. Or lure me. I am not a wimp. I am in place. Saluting my king. Obeying his orders.

Praising his name. Building his kingdom. No one has to send me flowers. Gifts. Food. Candy. Or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled. Cradled.

Cared for. Or catered to. I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside.

I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit. When Jesus calls me into this army, I had nothing materially. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead.

[50:51] I will win spiritually. My God has supplied my needs and will continue to supply all of my needs. I am more than a conqueror.

I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ. Devils cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me.

Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me. And hell cannot handle me. Because I am safe in my Saviour.

I am a soldier. Even death cannot destroy me. For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, he will promote me. And then allow me to rule with him.

I am a soldier in the army. And I am marching. Claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around. I am a soldier. And I am heaven bound. And here I stand.

[51:47] Will you stand with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ? I am a soldier. You can put your name there. You can say, I am a soldier.

Because we're called to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

And so, for the meantime, but thou, O man of God, fight the good fight of the faith. Lay hold on eternal life.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for that. Lord, we thank you for that. Your word, it urges us. It commands. It's your command for us, Lord, to be such. To be good soldiers in that awesome army of God.

Lord, shoulder to shoulder with the very angels, the host of heaven. That we are called to this great cause, this great purpose, this great enterprise, Lord.

And there's a fight on our hands every day. Pray for this folk here today. And it's really for all of us. There's things to fight against. There's things to fight for. But you clothe us with your armor.

[52:50] The armor of righteousness. The armor of light. The whole armor of God. Help us, Lord, to find your strength. Not our own, but strength. Power from on high.

That power from above. Lord, fill us with your spirit's power. Help us to be a people that will not shirk. That will not slacken. That will not weaken.
But yet will march forward ever stronger. Ever stronger. Until we'll march right on to that glory land.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.