

# Jihad and Ephesians 6

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[ 0 : 00 ] We live in a time when we are surrounded by images of destruction and war, words of anger, threats of retribution and vengeance.

We have read of such realities. We have seen images of such things in countries like Bosnia, Sudan, Kashmir. But these have been safely distant, removed from our bus ride to work and from our trip to the corner store.

Peace and security has been a significant and defining feature of the North American continent for over 150 years.

Even while World War I and World War II raged in Europe and Asia, there were no attacks on North American territory. The killing fields were someone else's and not in our neighborhood.

September 11th has changed all of that and set in motion a chain of events that seems to be picking up momentum. Our own airplanes have been turned into tools of death.

[ 1 : 09 ] And now our own postal service is being used to disseminate deadly plague. We are angry. We have been attacked. And now in retaliation, we see pictures of swept-wing black bombers, carpet bombing, a country that has already been devastated by 20 years of war.

We see pictures of poor families with bundles on their back and fear in their children's eyes thronging the roads out of Kabul and Kandahar.

In 1990, I was in Pakistan. The Gulf War had begun. And we listened on our radio to BBC's updates of the smart bombs.

And then we began to experience with the Church of Pakistan, the Christian Church, the implications of that. Churches were attacked.

My father's grave and the large cross that was on it was broken. Soon after, the town of Shantinagar in Pakistan, which means place of peace, a town of over 5,000 Christians, paid for that war by being burned to the ground.

[ 2 : 47 ] Two political scientists have written about this new reality. Bernard Lewis, at the time of the Gulf War, wrote something that is proven eerily present in this article, in his article, The Roots of Muslim Rage.

He wrote, We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and governments that pursue them. This is no less than the clash of civilizations, the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.

Following up on this theme, in 1993, Samuel Huntington, professor of jurisprudence at Oxford, I'm sorry, at Harvard, wrote in Foreign Policy Review, In Asia, the great historic fault lines between civilizations are once more aflame.

This is particularly true along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations, from the bulge of Africa to Central Asia. Violence occurs between Muslims on one hand and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Greek Orthodox in Cyprus, Armenians in the Caucasus, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, and Buddhists in Burma, Catholics in the Philippines.

Islam has bloody borders. Yesterday, I looked, and we looked together at the pillars of Islam, the five major pillars, the creed, there is only one God, and Muhammad is his prophet, the prayers that are offered five times a day, the almsgiving that is absolutely essential, one fortieth that every good Muslim gives, at the fast of Ramzan, or Ramadan, when all Muslims, for one month, do not eat between sunrise and sunset, or drink, or smoke, and hajj, the travel to Mecca, to visit the holy shrine there, and circle the black rock called the Kaaba.

[ 5 : 14 ] But we spent more time looking at the word jihad, jihad. And there is a lot of discussion in the Muslim community, right from the very beginnings of Islam, whether this should be a sixth pillar.

In fact, there is a large group of Islam that would say this should be a sixth pillar. What does jihad mean? It means struggle, or striving.

And it has several different meanings of where that struggle is implied. The one that we have heard in our own media, and that we have heard listed, is that it's a personal struggle against sin in one's own life.

It's a personal struggle against those things that would take you away from God. And certainly the Quran does list this as one reality of jihad. But there are several others jihad is the struggle to spread the borders of Islam to the ends of the earth until the whole world becomes submissive to God.

Islam means submission. And therefore, jihad is that striving that every Muslim is asked to take so that Islam will spread over the entire world.

[ 6 : 36 ] But this is also a struggle and a jihad, a striving, against internal attacks, against those who do not carry out the teachings of Islam.

In the Church of Pakistan, the Diocese of Hyderabad, our bishop is committed to following the ways of Jesus Christ and his teachings. He is the only bishop who is willing to take Muslim converts and risk the wrath of the community.

Our top pastor, his name is Daniel, born in the city of Multan, right in the middle of Pakistan, as a young man, the only son of a very wealthy landowning family, decided to follow Jesus Christ.

He was hounded from his own home. his own brother was committed to kill him. He had to go into hiding for several years.

Daniel is now in the Diocese of Hyderabad. He has two children, two little girls. When I saw the children up this morning, I thought of his two girls. Daniel has been anointed to preach very clearly the good news in a country where this is not acceptable.

[ 7 : 57 ] And he now has received threats against his family if he continues to preach. This is in a church like I am doing here.

But because he is known as someone who has come from the house of Islam and who was a Muslim by birth, he has a particular pressure upon him.

And he really is not aware of what the future holds. The fourth place where jihad is used is in the struggle to defend the Islamic religion against outside attacks.

Whereas the second form of jihad, the striving to spread Islam into new areas, was voluntary. The struggle to defend Islam against outside attacks is obligatory upon all Muslims.

and forms the essence of how the Islamic world presently is feeling. Bin Laden in his video statement on October 7th stated, Our Islamic nation has been tasting humiliation and disgrace for more than 80 years.

[ 9 : 14 ] Its sons killed and their blood spilled. Its sanctities desecrated. Islam feels itself under attack.

I remember traveling to a small village outside of Kunri where we were based. As we drove it was totally black, there's no electricity out there, and we eventually found our way to a small village that we had been asked to go to.

There was a group of Christians there and others as well, and we were having a worship service. And in the distance I saw a small light, blue light flickering and I asked them, you know, what was that blue light?

It was totally dark otherwise, we just had little kerosene lanterns in our service. And they said, oh, come and see, come and see. So I wandered my way across the fields beside mud houses around the edge of where the animals were kept, seeing little lights flickering where people were still cooking their meals, living basically as they have lived for millennia.

The only difference is they use kerosene for light, but basically they cook by wood fires, they live very simply off the land. As I rounded the corner I saw what the blue light was.

[ 10 : 31 ] It was a television. It was being run by a battery that was powered, it had been charged up in town, and we'll run a television for two hours. And the show that was on was Baywatch.

Baywatch. Here you have a conservative Muslim country watching, Baywatch. And that's not just in one village.

That is in hundreds of villages. You have the leaders of Islam that are seeking by their standards to produce and encourage morality.

And you have the airwaves filled with every sort of thing, and things far worse. In a small town of Umarmkot that still, I mentioned this yesterday, that still has open sewers and you walk across the open sewers, there are little internet cafes opening up all over the place and young men are going and typing on to www.sex.com.

How do you deal with that in a Muslim country? How do you fight that? And this is available everywhere. Islam feels itself under attack and they respond. For the Muslim, there is two worlds. [11:54] Darul Islam and Darul Harb. Darul Islam, the house of submission. Dar meaning house. Darul Harb, the house of war.

There are only two parts of the world. The part of the world where Islam is dominant, where men and women submit to the will of Allah and the house of war.

And jihad is that line in between those two worlds. I remember being, when we returned to Pakistan about four years ago and I had trouble with customs and I ended up having to go in myself to the Karachi port, I wore a shell of archimies as I always do there.

I had my topi, my hat on and the fellow said, you know, Westerners aren't allowed in here but if you wear your shell of archimies and you speak the language, we'll let you in.

So I got into this huge Karachi port authority, miles of containers and different things like that, wandering through it. Eventually I came and was able to talk with people and get my necessary things cleared through customs.

[13:09] with innumerable cups of tea as are very much part of that culture. And at the end of this, the man who would help me all of this had said, the commander of the port authority wants to speak to you.

He would like to talk to you. And so they led me through high sorts of buildings, the very top of the port authority in his office, overlooked the whole port of Karachi. Karachi.

And there was a man sitting in his military outfit. He had a massive beard down to about here, beautifully combed and tinted with red.

He was a patan. And he spoke to me about the patans. And those of you that have been following the news know that patans are the primary people who are involved in the Taliban.

The Taliban basically are made up patans. Patans are a tribal people with a strong commitment to honor. The word red is the word in Arabic for honor.

[14:11] This is the driving force behind a patan. Above his life, above anything else, is his honor. If a man, another Muslim, looks the wrong way on his wife, that man may be shot.

I traveled up to the frontier area some years before. Every house is fortified. This is before the Russians were there. every home has got a little turret up in one corner.

The men all carry guns. Honor is the essence of their society. Anyway, this man spoke to me in flawless English. And he said, I want to talk to you.

I hear that you're a missionary. I hadn't said I was a missionary, but if you're in Pakistan and if you speak the local language, you end up being called that.

I said, yes, I am, wondering how the discussion was going to go, but feeling encouraged that my luggage had already gone through customs. And he said, what do you think?

[15:25] He said, do you think actually that the prophet Moses was more an example of the prophet Muhammad than Jesus was? He said, what do you think? Do you think that actually he was more of a real leader than Jesus?

I said, that's a very good insight. I said, why have you been studying the prophet Muhammad and the prophet Musa? Or where have you been reading about him and his leadership?

leadership. Because in the Quran, the name Moses or Musa is mentioned, but there's very little detail about him. He said, I read the Bible every day. Here's the Pathan.

I said, you read the Bible every day. I said, how does it come? He said, well, let me tell you a story. In 1947, Pakistan achieved its independence.

I was a young man in a college in Peshawar. And again, it's a name that maybe some of us become familiar with. I was a Pathan, he said. Peshawar is the capital of the Pathan part of Pakistan.

[16:28] Even as much as Jalalabad is the capital for the Pathans in Afghanistan. Kabul is a sort of a cosmopolitan city. You have Tajiks. You have Uzbeks.

You have Pathans living there. But Jalalabad is the capital. And Peshawar is the capital in Pakistan. He said, in Peshawar, we were young men and we had just got freedom. And we wanted to show that.

I was going to a Christian college. And there was an Anglican priest who was teaching us religion or was teaching the Christians religion and we Pathans didn't have to go.

He said that we had freedom not to go and freedom was in the air and Pakistan was becoming a nation. And so we decided we were going to, once the Declaration of Independence had been formed, we would go and teach these guys a lesson.

So we went to this man's house and we destroyed it. We thought, we're going to drive this guy out. We went into his home and broke it down. And he said, the police, these are Pakistani police, found us and caught us and took us to jail and said, though Pakistan may have independence, it's not leaving its principles of justice.

[ 17 : 39 ] You guys are being charged. charged. And so this young man from England, Church Missionary Society, was brought in front and said, the police said, we'd like you to detail what charges you wish to lay against these young men.

Are there students in your college? What do you want? And this young man, and this is this baton telling me, remember the code of honor, the code of honor which demands revenge.

This baton said to me, he said, this young man said, I'm not pressing charges. I want you to drop everything. These are my students. They made a mistake.

I'm not charging them. He said, after that, a bunch of us batons started going to his class. We wanted to find out what motivated a man to do what he did.

He said, I'm not pressing charges. Ephesians chapter 6 speaks about that motivation. Ephesians chapter 6, a passage on what warfare is for the Christian, very clearly declares that it's not as our world sees.

[ 19 : 01 ] Ephesians chapter 6, Paul said about a warfare in the invisible realm. He speaks about a battle which is not against flesh and blood, but against powers, against spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil, world rulers of this present darkness.

This is a reality that we don't like to hear in the West. This is a reality that we would prefer not to even think about. Yet it's a reality that if we are to be people of this book, we need to understand and accept.

There's a reality of spiritual forces that are at work, that are beyond our understanding. There's a reality that the battle that is being fought right now in Afghanistan is part of a larger battle.

is part of a larger reality that we do not understand. And what sort of armor are we called to have in this battle?

Is it B-2s? Stealth bombers? I believe in just war. I believe there is a place for war. I believe that we need to be very careful when we take up those sorts of armaments against anyone.

[ 20 : 36 ] And I'm not sure whether America is doing the right thing. I do know that there needs to be justice. I do know that something needs to be done. However, while I may not know what the right thing to do right now in Afghanistan is, I do know that Paul has taught us very clearly what we as Christians must do.

He has said, we are in a spiritual battle. We are in a warfare which makes the present reality that we are witnessing absolutely tiny and insignificant.

We are in a battle for the hearts and souls of man. He talks about the armor that we should wear. My time is almost up. I think one of the key pieces of the armor that is significant in these days is the belt of truth.

All truth is God's truth. In the midst of the struggle that we are seeing, it is very important for we Christians to be committed to truth. Even when that truth is painful, even when we need to look at our own culture and see areas where we have gone wrong.

[ 22 : 02 ] As a culture and as a civilization, we dare not point fingers at anyone else. We, the Christian civilization that drove the Jews out of Spain in 1492.

That instituted the Inquisition that followed for 200 years later. When we are facing the Muslim world, we need to have truth about ourselves and about our civilization and what we have done. And our attitude must be one of humility when we are truthful. Civilizationally, we have no moral high ground.

By real politic, we have the right, and I believe by the principles of justice, there is a necessity for us to follow the perpetrators of what happened on September 11th.

But as a civilization, we have no moral high ground to come from. Personally, the only high ground that we have is in the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 23 : 12 ] The person who, when faced with opposition, when knowing that one of his own disciples was going to betray him, took off his outer clothes, knelt down and washed all of their feet.

The person who, when faced with a disciple who had betrayed him publicly, and one of his other followers who was faithful had taken a sword and cut off the ear of the people that had come, said, put your swords down.

For those that draw the sword will die by the sword. And finally, someone who, when he was on the cross, prayed, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

And the faith of his disciples spread through the Roman world, not by the sword, not by power, like some other religions have spread.

It's spread by the testimony of lives that have been radically changed by an encounter with this God-man, Jesus Christ. The Roman civilization was never the same.

[ 24 : 48 ] And Ephesians, Paul in Ephesians 6 calls us to realize that this is the sort of warfare that we are involved in. A warfare that will be fought and won, not with conventional tools.

The only offensive weapon that is mentioned in Ephesians 6 is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. In Islam, Christians and Jews are called Eli Katab, people of the book.

That is how we are known. Are we people of the book? Does this book inform, direct, and guide us? Is this a book that we read regularly, systematically? Is this a book that we share with others?

In Pakistan, one of the greatest privileges is to be involved with a team of Bible translators and to see Scripture published in different languages. We've just produced the Baluchi New Testament.

[ 26 : 03 ] Baluchistan is that part of Pakistan that borders on Iran. Baluchis look a lot like Batans. And we've just published the New Testament.

And of course, one of the statements of Islam is that we have changed Scripture. I don't have it with me, but on one side is the Greek New Testament.

In Greek, with Baluchi, interlinear. The other side is the translation into Baluchi. When we dedicated in Karachi that book, there was a firestorm in the Baluchi community.

Several believers were attacked. One of our men was shot. And it's now paralyzed from his knee down, the young man who just got married, because he was involved in that.

This word is powerful. It's the one book you cannot carry more than two copies of into Saudi Arabia still.

[ 27 : 11 ] If we don't see it as a sword, a lot of other people do. we are in a struggle.

We are called to take our eyes off what we can see and to accept a spiritual reality. I love the picture in Joshua chapter 5 where Joshua with this group of desert Bedouin Jews who had traveled for 40 years, had very little experience in warfare, was going to attack Jericho, fortified city.

And Joshua chapter 5, we find out who he met before that battle. He suddenly was faced by a man and you remember he said, are you for us or against us? The answer was neither.

I am the commander of the armies of the Lord. He stood with the drawn sword. And we know in the final days that our Lord Jesus will return and he also will be carrying a sword.

In those in-between years, the years that we live in, we are called to have that perspective that is woven all the way through this book. we are called to interact with our Muslims friends, not from a standpoint of antagonism, for our battle is not against flesh and blood.

[ 28 : 57 ] It's not against our Muslim neighbor. It's not even against Osama bin Laden. It is against the ideology and the principles that these people believe in with all their hearts.

that is where the battle is happening. And we have an ideology. We have a truth that is far more powerful. And I don't know whether I'm going to see that baton in heaven.

I don't know. But I suspect that I will. And he will be there because a young missionary dared to forgive. Dared not to seek retribution.

Dared to maintain a relationship with these young Pashto men. May God give us such courage.

May God give us such love for Muslims in our midst.

Right now, they are our minority. Right now, it is our responsibility to open our hearts, our homes, to them.

[ 29 : 59 ] And maybe in that process, they too will touch this book. May God give us grace. Amen. Amen.