

Hope in the Ever Present Battle

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Preacher: David Corrente

[0:00] Thank you so much, music team. I will miss being led by you all and hearing the sounds of praise and worship.

Coming from all of your vocal cords, if you do not know me, if this is your first time, my name is Pastor David Corrente, and I have had the sweet joy, the privilege of pastoring here for 11 years at 99 and now for the last year at SBC.

And it is coming to a close this Wednesday. We are flying out. So we are packing up and we are just so thankful and grateful for all of your service to us and to the ways that you're just continually minister us.

We've got people coming in to help. We've got dinners coming. We've got food coming. And we are just overwhelmed by your love. And so we're so incredibly thankful and grateful, especially for this opportunity.

Thank you, BK, for giving me one last opportunity to bless you all with the word and pray that it's an encouragement this morning. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

[1:18] How majestic is your name in all the earth. We are but one people. We are but one church.

Yet you have called us to yourself. And you are making much of your name in us. May we grasp the significance of that reality.

Father, that your son, Jesus Christ, went to the cross on our behalf, was raised to new life, and in his perfect life and death and resurrection and ascension, we have him.

And we have him together in this church. So, Father, as we come to your word, we pray that it is not of us and not to us, Lord, but to your name be the glory.

As you establish the greatness of your name in the redeemed here and those you call your sons and daughters. So, Father, we thank you and we praise you for this opportunity to open up your word once again.

[2:52] We ask in your son's precious and holy name. Amen. Amen. The joy that I had last time to open up the book of Philippians was a thank you.

And it was right for me to do that because of the thankfulness of my heart towards you to honor the Lord by the work that we have done together, the labor, the ministry to me and to my family personally, and just the joy that we've had to serve together.

This time, I come to you as your pastor to exhort. The biblical word for exhort has a range of meaning from encourage to build up, to strengthen, but also to charge or to warn, speak fervently concerning a matter.

And so, my pastoral heart is overwhelmed by thinking of you all this morning. And I believe I'm putting myself in good company because when you think of the authors of the New Testament, if you think of the epistles and how they were wanting to encourage the church, they often ended their ministries with exhortations.

Think about Jude. Jude warned about false teachers and warning believers that they may need to be snatched away from the fire and those who are there to help grab them out of that fire.

[4:20] What about the apostle John? At the end of his first letter, he warned about keeping away from idolatry. And then, in the end of his third letter, he warned about deatrophies and a false teacher and pulling away believers.

What about Peter? 2 Peter 3, he ends his epistles with warning about being carried away from error, falling away from steadfastness in the faith.

Paul, who we will get to in a moment, but think about when he was with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20. He warned them about fierce wolves coming in and weeping with the elders as he warned them.

What about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? Before the prayer in John 17, he was with them in the upper room and he warned them about being scattered. He warned them about the reality of him going to the cross.

The temptations that were going to arise about abandoning him and how in the world you will have tribulation. Those were some of his last words in the upper room. Now, they always come back with a brief word of hope, which I plan to do.

[5:48] But why would they do this? Why is there so much exhortation, warning, and charges about the Christian life in the scriptures? Because the Christian life is a battle.

Because the Christian life is hard. Someone comes up to you off the street, one of your family members in the upcoming Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners you're going to have in a couple of months, they come and talk to you and be like, why are you a Christian and what is it like?

How would you describe it? How would you portray it as a credible, reliable witness to the true experience that you have being a Christian on this earth?

Would it match how the apostles described it, how the biblical writers described it, how our Lord and Savior experienced it, and how you're actually experiencing it right now?

in everything you're walking through since becoming a blood-bought believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? They framed the Christian life around the language of a battleground.

[7:05] The Christian life in the language of warfare, is that what came to mind? If someone were to ask you, what's the Christian life like? Give me the nuts and the bolts. Give me what it really is.

And you say, I battle every single day. It's hard. Would you be able to be that transparent and that real with somebody?

Over the past number of weeks, you've been preparing for Romans 8, and I'm just so excited for you. I'm excited for Romans 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

It's one of the most glorious, sweetest, and hopeful chapters in all the scriptures. Pastor Dave has been trying to prepare you with the right mindset, the mindset of Christ.

Chris prepared you last week with having the fear of the Lord so you can have this inner peace. And so as I think about where you guys are headed and where you are going and where you have been, these two verses came to mind in Romans 8, where in one sense, in Romans 8, it tells you that you need to put to death the deeds of the flesh in the power of the Spirit, right, because that's what BK has been pounding on and making so clear that you cannot live the Christian life in the power of the flesh.

[8:28] But then also in Romans 8, you have the reality that you are conforming to the image of his Son. So in one sense, you are putting to death the deeds of the flesh, the very areas of your life that are not yet like Christ, but you're getting there.

You're headed towards Christ-likeness. Everything that God is doing in your life is conforming you and everything that everything is happening in the church, everything you're doing in the church is conforming you collectively as his body to Christ, to the image of his Son.

We are here in that daily battleground of putting to death the deeds of the flesh, yet at the same time, we're conforming to Christ. There's a pretty wide gap in between those, if you haven't noticed yet.

And if you haven't noticed it, let me be the one to graciously tell you. There's a massive gap in between where you are now and where the perfections of Christ are. But that's the battle.

And I'm here to tell you, and I will tell you multiple times, that that's a normal battle. That's the battle you and I face every single day.

[9:45] That's the battle that this church faces every single day. And it's normal. It's a temptation. There is a temptation in our hearts in the nature of the Christian life to just dilute it.

And I think that happens in a couple of ways. You know, persecution right now is limited. Like, I'm not sure many of you are running for your lives. I'm certainly not running for my life because I follow Christ.

There's no real national or international conflict that you and I are personally involved with. We know there's international trouble. But we're aware of those realities. But like, what's the effect right now?

Like, are you going to wonder whether you're going to go home to a house or not? No. We're still pretty comfortable in our living. We still have an abundance.

We're still pretty prosperous. We're still having choices. We still have a lot of cultural norms that allow us to live our Christian lives with no real sense of resistance.

[10:52] I know there's some there, but just think how many times in a day you're ultimately challenged because of your faith. compare that to what's going on around the world sometimes where people are wondering whether they're going to come back to a war-torn house or not, whether they're going to see their brothers and sisters in Christ or not.

I was hearing about a church in Iraq recently that they have to take, everybody has to take different routes to a certain home to even meet together because they can't all go in a group to the same home in the same route.

None of us had that burden this morning. None of us had that fight. What can seep into our minds is that because of our context and the Christian life here kind of in this Western society, sometimes we can get into a mindset that maybe our Christian life is more like an all-inclusive resort or maybe like a nice cruise.

I just kind of show up. I have everything prepared for me. I even have my own seat every week, my suite that I sit in and if I don't like something, I can just go to the other part of the ship or maybe I don't like that ship so I'm going to go try another cruise line altogether that goes to a different place that has a different menu of what I like instead of an army base or a battleship.

The church is depicted in many ways, a city on a hill, light to the world, assault, a body, a building, but so often it is recalled as a battleship where the stakes are high and the cost is the soul.

[12:47] The early church struggled with this. If you just think about the reality of new believers in the Greco-Roman world now coming into faith, what an opportunity for the apostles to say how happy you're going to be all of the time, how prosperous you're going to be all of the time.

You will never face another challenge. You will always be wonderfully, exuberantly joyful. Is that what the New Testament apostles did?

No, they were experiencing trials at every level of intensity, at every age, in all seasons, at all maturity levels.

You have the Thessalonian church that are new believers. You have the Ephesian church that had the Apostle John and the Apostle Paul and Timothy.

You had some of the generals of the battlefield going there and teaching them. You had all ages, all seasons, all maturity levels, facing different trials, but experiencing them together as believers.

[14:00] So once again, my overarching desire to exhort you in this morning is I want to encourage you that the battle you are facing in conforming to the Lord Jesus Christ is normal.

It's normal. As you are conforming and changing into your Savior, the battle and the war, the pursuit for faith and the difficulties that are coming out of the normal outworking of faith as God works in you, that the church is called to battle together, knowing that each battle you are walking through individually and collectively is strengthening, maturing you in the faith until glory.

This battle will not end until final rest has come, until face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ and you are fully and finally and faithfully transformed in His likeness.

So I want to walk through some scriptures and as you know me, sometimes I love to thumb through lots of scriptures.

So get ready for this at this moment. Here's the reality of the ever-present battle. Dave, why do you say that it's normal? Well, let's go to 2 Timothy chapter 4 and we're actually going to be making our way backwards.

[15:21] I know that's a little bit odd because if you know me, I like going from Genesis to Revelation but we're going to be working ourselves backwards a little bit in the attempt to see how normal this reality is for the Christian life to be a battle.

So you have the Apostle Paul and this is the last letter that he would write. So he is at the end of his life. He is in prison. He's writing to the next generation of pastor, church planter, disciples, and Titus and Timothy.

And in verse 7 he says this. 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 7.

I have fought the good fight. I have fought the good fight. He is at the end of his life, the end of his ministry, and he is saying it was a battle.

It was hard. I fought tooth and nail. This is an apostle speaking. Someone especially marked out by the Lord himself to do the Lord's work.

[16:44] I fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. No one would ever accuse Paul of keeping it in his own strength.

But he fought. No one would ever accuse Paul that he earned his way to heaven. But he fought. He fought. I have fought the good fight.

This word good is just the moral quality of something. The goodness of God. The good works that you act out.

It is a good fight. It is a worthy fight. It is a fruitful fight. It is a purposeful fight. The battle that you are in each and every day for your faith that you are striving in.

And you may have known the words that you sang this morning all too real. The waves are crashing over me. Deep cries out too deep.

[18:04] Waves of unbelief. You may be in that right now. And Paul says that it is a good fight to be in. It is a worthy battle to be in.

And you have a responsibility on your part as God works in you to fight. The fight for faith is worth it. It is worth every moment. It is worth every second of it. What is involved in this fight? We will go back to 1 Timothy chapter 6. 1 Timothy chapter 6 where he first uses this language.

Verse 12. 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 12. So there is more ministry to happen.

So he is calling Timothy to fight the good fight of faith. Someone calls you how are you doing today?

[19:08] You just say I'm fighting. My faith is weak. I need strength but I am fighting. Maybe sometime this week you'll use that language and it will warm my heart.

That's what Paul says. Timothy fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. And you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Take hold of eternal life. Does that mean earn your salvation? No. We're going through Romans. Of course Paul doesn't mean that. But you have an obligation with the power that you have in salvation to fight.

And it's a good fight. look up at verse 11. What is involved in this fight? Why is he calling him to fight?

Why is it hard? Verse 11. Flee from these things you man of God and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

[20:20] In the fight for faith there is a fleeing and a pursuing. That's what we're doing every single day. A fleeing from the unfruitful deeds of the flesh and the pursuing of the holiness that we have in Christ in the truth every day.

So if you wonder why that's the contrast. Going back to that Romans 8 passage, right, you're conforming to the image of the Son, of Jesus Christ.

Fleeing is hard. Can we just admit that? Fleeing the passions of the flesh are hard.

It's difficult. Pursuing what you know is right and faithful in Christ is hard. Can we admit that at the same time?

Each and every day you and I have to flee from the things that the Bible calls us to flee from. Anxiety, fear, pride, selfishness, foolishness, laziness, lust, grumbling, complaining, coveting, worldliness, error, unbelief.

[22:00] It's got a little warm in here, didn't it? That's worth fleeing from. And the Lord knows how to bring these out of us.

He knows how to see these are the areas that we struggle in. These are the temptations of our hearts. This is what we find satisfaction in the world in and here's how I want to bring you to satisfaction in Christ.

Holiness in the truth, in the new man. He knows how to do that through trials, conflicts, health struggles, relationships in the home, marriage and kids and extended family, work relationships with employees or employers, church relationships with your pastors and one another.

He knows how to bring that out. So that you would conform to the image of Christ. So that you would conform to the image of your Savior.

So as you are fleeing away from those things, you are pursuing what God wants you to pursue.

Dave, you just said four or five things that I know are in my heart.

[23:22] Where do I go from here? What do I do? Well, I don't have any magic formula for you. All we have is what God's word says that he's trying to pursue you to. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.

all of the categories of the works of the flesh, you can now say, here's where I need to pursue. I need to flee these things.

I need to flee coveting and I need to pursue faithfulness and self-control.

I need to flee anger and I need to pursue love and peace. But in the midst of that, where is your faith going?

Your faith is going in a couple of different places. First, his promises. God's promises. Every single day, the fight and the battleground of your heart is revolving around what God says, who he is, and what he calls you to do.

[24 : 42] What does God say about your situation? What does God say about himself in the situation? What does God say about you and who he is and how he's working in that situation?

It's a fight for faith. God, help me to trust you and what you say about yourself and who I am in you in this situation.

And you have his word, which contains his promises, but it calls you how to respond.

His promises call you how to respond, and we need to know his word and his truth so that this is how I think, this is how I respond, this is what I believe.

that's part of the battle every day what does god say i need to believe that but you also need to have faith concerning his power you also need to have faith concerning the power of god in your heart in redemption producing these realities i know many of you just stayed up last night and witnessed his power it's awesome you got you guys you guys believed it you guys witnessed it sometimes we don't take that same belief and that power when we see it in each other when we see it in the work of our own hearts that much more powerful than a storm is the resurrection of the lord jesus christ and the resurrection of a dead heart to new life that he could actually make you and i who were rebelling from him running from him desiring everything but him in heaven and he says no you are my child you are my son you are my daughter i am making you much like me that storm last night doesn't hold a candle to what god is doing in you right now do you believe that do you trust god in that do you trust his power that when everything within you wants to complain or covet or be foolish or be prideful you believe in that moment lord you have given me that power to flee to run and to be faithful if i haven't said it yet i want to remind you that is normal that is the christian life on a daily basis like dave ha he keeps saying it's normal am i missing something is there something i should have seen before in the scriptures possibly uh first was you being a disciple i want you to turn to luke chapter nine for a moment luke chapter nine jesus before you even came to christ warned you luke chapter nine verse 23 this was the common pattern for jesus he would warn the disciples i'm going to suffer many things i'm going to be rejected by the elders the chief priests and the scribes i'm going to be killed i'm going to be raised up on the third day who's with me that that was the pep talks that jesus gave that was welcome to following me 101 for the disciples disciples verse 23 if anyone wishes to come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me whoever wishes to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake he is the one who will save it for what is a man profited if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself his soul jesus told every single believer before they came to follow him that it would be costly that it would be hard that it would be difficult that's the definition of a disciple the one who counts the cost and fights the the daily battle for the sake of christ you got to deny yourself that's the fleeing

[29 : 32] and you've got to take up the cross and follow christ that's the pursuing daily did i say that it's normal every day that's what christ is saying that your fight for faith every day is normal your battle and the fight for faith for the fleeing and the pursuing is how christ has already prescribed it to be we won't turn there but even think of luke 14 where jesus says who builds a tower without counting the materials and the cost and the resources that it's going to take which king goes into war without first taking stock of his troops and his resources if he can even win the battle being a disciple of the lord jesus christ automatically means that there is going to be hardships and trials and difficulties and your fight for your heart is going to be daily turn to second corinthians chapter 10 paul warned that this is a very hard spiritual battle second corinthians chapter 10 starting in verse 3 for though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh flesh but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of god and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of christ there is a spiritual battle going on in the world and in your home and in this church and in your heart that's how paul describes a christian life

we walk in the flesh but we don't we don't war according to the flesh there are spiritual forces that we cannot see that are wanting to usurp all of the design of god the creation of god he wants to tear down the power of god everything raised up against the knowledge of god you want to talk about a normal daily fight for faith how about taking every thought captive to the obedience of christ every thought everything that goes through your mind on a daily basis which we all know is significant wherever you're at in life what's the next stage what's the next season family life marriage kids church life we have a thousand thoughts every single day it's a battle isn't it to take your thoughts captive when they start wavering getting kind of outside the bounds of what you're to pursue and you're kind of starting to go back to what you're supposed to flee from it's a battle and we're going to get to at the end the weapons that the lord gives us these divinely powerful weapons but i just want to continue to make the point

there is a battle go to james chapter 4 james chapter 4 james chapter 4 verse 1 what is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you is it not the source of the your pleasures is not the source of your pleasures that wage war in your members you lust and you do not have so you commit murder you are envious and cannot obtain so you fight and quarrel you do not have because you do not ask this is written to the church this is written to christians the disagreements that we have between people the quarrels and the conflicts is because internally there's a war raging and it can get to the point where you do not have and you murder you can't get something so you take it lord this situation isn't working out the way i want it to so therefore i am going to act my way according to my feelings and my choices and my pleasures and my will you have a war going on within your heart on a daily basis and the more that we can think about this war the way that god wants us to desires us to and the battle that rages within then at least we can think properly and believe faithfully how he wants us to respond to that because this is where it can go to first peter just a couple pages later first peter chapter two so he tells him hey this is who you are verse nine your chosen race a royal priesthood holy nation a people of god's own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light for you once not a people but now you are the people of god you would not receive mercy but now you have received mercy so your christian life now is going to be free from pain free from difficulties easy and wonderful and convenient it's the very next verse beloved i urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul thanks peter i'm warmed and filled now can we see how evident the apostles who were trained and taught by our lord jesus christ who gave them the instructions that every single day you are waking up onto a battlefield into the battle ground and we wonder sometimes why do i want to give up so easily or why do i want to give in to these fleshly lusts that wage war against the soul because i just

i want it to get over with sometimes i want it to be easier i expect something different war is burdensome it's heavy war is sacrificial it costs a lot war is tiresome we want it to be easier war is exhausting we want it to be over have you just been in the midst of a battle and you just said can it just be over now lord can i just get on with a different part of my life and war is inconvenient war is inconvenient it doesn't really fit my schedule this is a hard one and i want to camp out here just for a moment because this affects all of us if the christian life and the war for souls and the life of the church is a battleground we have to be very very careful that we are missing the opportunities to fight these battles with our brothers and sisters just because it inconveniences us but the life of the church doesn't fit into my weekly schedule the bearing of burdens is too difficult and so i'm going to show up on sunday morning i'm going to have something preached at me i'm going to sing a couple of songs but i'm not going to weary myself with the battle that others are going through or i'm not going to be transparent about the battle that i am going through and need help with it's inconvenient i've got to get to work i've got to get my activities in i've got to watch my shows whatever all of us have excuses for war is burdensome sacrificial weary tiresome exhausting and inconvenient but we all go through it and sometimes we act like we're not and we're too busy in our own minds to take the time and be inconvenienced because our brothers and sisters need it that's the reality of the battle as christians you and i go through it each and every single day we all have unique different purposeful designed by the lord battles and it's difficult and it's hard so here's where the hope comes in i gave some exhortations but i also want to provide some hope go to exodus chapter 14 i want you to see what the lord says about himself so in the same ways that i encourage you to think about the promises of god in the midst of the battle i want to do that in this sermon you have the redeemed or the people of god here who have now been saved out of egypt or they're being saved

out of egypt the sea is going to be divided and i want you to see what god says in verse 14 the lord will fight for you while you keep silent let me read that again the lord will fight for you while you keep silent does that mean that they did nothing they just sat on their heels no they had to get prepared to go they had to put the blood on the doorposts they had to prepare the way that god prepared them for the battle but when the midst of the battle came and the only thing that god could do because they didn't have the power to do it god entered in god's power fought and he won this is what the lord says i'll fight for you look at chapter 15 they sing praises to him because of the great power that the lord used against the egyptians that people feared the lord and they believed in the lord and in his servant moses and in verse 3 of chapter 15 in this song of praise they sing the lord is a warrior the lord is a warrior we love to think about how god is gracious and compassionate and he is merciful and just he is but you also need a god who is majestic in power verse 6 and shatters the enemy that's your god too that's who your god is in the midst of the battle when all these thoughts and speculations are raised up and are lofty against the lord you have a god who is majestic in power and can shatter his enemy as you fight and as you sit as you believe and as you hope that's your god now turn to joshua chapter 5 this is why i wanted to read joshua chapter 6 you got to read about the actions again they weren't sitting on their hands they were called to do something he told israel you have to actually walk around and do you know what happened before they had to walk around men are going to get a little squeamish here but they had to circumcise all the men before they went to battle the lord gave them time to heal but that's not exactly the time you really want to go to war amen amen and amen so god calls them to be faithful all the men are circumcised but now you gotta go here's my instructions he gives them the instructions but then this man shows up in chapter five look at verse 13 now it came about when joshua was by jericho that he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand and joshua went to him and said to him are you for us or for our adversaries he said no rather i indeed come now as the captain of the host of the lord and joshua fell on his face to the earth and bowed down and said

to him what has my lord to say to his servant the captain of the lord's host said to joshua remove your sandals from your feet for the place where you are standing is holy and joshua did so this is a pre-incarnate christ this is the god the second person of the trinity coming down before he took on his fleshly nature to wage war against the enemies of israel and he came with a sword and he came as the captain of the lord's hosts this word for hosts is just armies the lord's army armies he's leading the army of heaven against the enemies of god you have the captain of the lord of hosts behind you as you fight the battle daily israel had the sea they got to witness all of the miraculous majestic power of everything that they did you have the resurrection you have new life a new heart you have christ personally you have the holy spirit that is within you as the down payment of your salvation and the power that you have to submit and to obey to flee to pursue!

[47 : 08] this is amazing just for the sake of time i'm just going to read these you can write them down psalm 24 8 who is this king of glory the lord strong and mighty the lord mighty in battle Isaiah 42 verse 13 the lord goes forth like a warrior he will arouse his zeal like a man of war he will make a loud shout indeed he will raise a war cry Matthew 16 verse 18 i will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it this is how God presents himself when his people are facing battle so how can

i be prepared and if you said Ephesians 6 you are right on the money turn to Ephesians 6 to get a full exposition of this i know that BK has walked through this and this is something that has been near and dear to his heart about spiritual warfare he's written on it extensively so i'm just at the tip of the iceberg here but i want to encourage you in the hopefulness that you have and remember again this is so typical of the apostles how did Paul start Ephesians you have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ here's what you have chapter 1 chapter 2 he made us alive in

Christ chapter 3 now to him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think i know sometimes i gotta cry to these things it's hard what does he end the book with a call to war he given you everything that you have in Christ in the first couple of chapters and then he gives you commandments you're to walk worthy in a manner of your calling you're to walk in light you're to walk in love you're to walk in wisdom and then he says it's going to be a battle it's going to be a fight verse 10 chapter 6 finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might put on the full armor of

God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil for our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the powers against the world forces of this darkness against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places can I just say if we're not experiencing that right now then we're not alive you guys go out into the world and you feel the struggle every single day something's going on in this world something's just kind of not right something needs to change this is what's happening there are schemes of Satan that are entering into our world into our culture into our homes into our churches that want to take it down and we know the Satan comes in as an angel of light sprinkling a little bit of truth on top to make it palatable so what's the call our strength needs to come from the

Lord we need to stand strong stand firm kind of sounds like Joshua doesn't it I'm sorry Moses in Exodus right I'm going to fight for you and you stand in Joshua's case is I'm going to fight for you just shout put on the full armor of God because you're going out into a battle ground each and every day you are not walking out onto the deck of a cruise ship here's what's at stake here's what the armor is going to help you with truth righteousness the gospel faith salvation and God's word you are to stand in the armor that he has given you verse 13 so that you will be able to resist in the evil day having done everything to stand firm you are still responsible to stand you are still responsible to put on the armor you are still responsible to get with the troops to get your marching orders to get to boot camp to get strengthened you're still responsible you still need to put on the armor stand firm therefore having girded your loins with the truth that your life is wrapped in the truth everything that you do how you think what you believe how you interact is connected with

[53:01] God's revelation having put on the breastplate of righteousness you put on the breastplate of righteousness to protect all of these organs that if they take one shot you could go down pretty quickly that you were striving not self righteousness is what the Pharisees did they made it look like they were acting in all the wonderful ways the Jewish should or maybe you're thinking of a Christian should no we're talking about an internal righteousness that you have been given by Christ that you know you need to strive for because he is leading you and guiding you verse 15 having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace Satan always wants to dumb down the power of the gospel he always wants to water it down always wants to dilute it always wants you and

I to think that it doesn't have the power that God says it does in addition to taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one you need to be able to prepare grow in your maturity and you need to be strengthened in your faith in believing God we all do there's not one of us in here that need to be more mature in how we believe God in the midst of the battle some of us think we can just run out in the battlefield in our own ideas we're bringing a water pistol!

We have no shield we have no protection we'll get humbled very very quickly verse 17 and take the helmet of salvation what you have in salvation you are a new person you're a new creature the old is gone the new has come the sword of the spirit which is the word of God the only offensive weapon that you have is something that you never created something that you didn't actually put the effort into it's God's word and lastly verse 18 with all prayer and petition pray at all times in the spirit and with this in view be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints all of this will not be effective unless you are praying in dependence to the captain of the lord of hosts who is a warrior and who can fight the battle while you stand

I'm so thankful that God has written the scriptures in real time what if you were to sit down with Abraham Isaac Jacob Joseph Moses Joshua David or Job would a cruise ship define any of their lives any of their walks before their God what about in the New Testament Zacharias John the Baptist the life of Christ himself the apostles the disciples they'd all describe it as a battle they'd all describe it as war fight for faith and one of these schemes of Satan is to believe that the battle doesn't really exist that there really isn't a war on truth a war on righteousness a war on faith a war on the gospel a war in salvation or war on

God's word I can guarantee you that every battle that is fighting right now in your heart in this church in the culture in the world comes back to Genesis 3 did God really say we need to be a people of yes God has really said he tries to fool you as if you don't have the power to overcome or the battle doesn't rage as fiercely as it does and his goal is to try to lull you to sleep and to strike while you're under the world's anesthesia and not walking in the spirit of God under the truth of the gospel and in his word and he is longing to take you down there's a constant hostility and fight for

faith but God fights for us the attacks and the battles and the struggles will come externally and internally but

[58:42] God fights for us the external battles the ones that come from the world outside of the church I know we kind of expect those and they're fairly predictable there's also internal battles in the life of the church the ones that come from within the church these are challenging and perplexing I understand but Paul warned!

Battles from without and battles from within but he provided hope he provided encouragement Paul knew that the gates of Hades would not prevail over the church Paul knew that this was the bride of Christ that he loved that it was the flock of the chief shepherd and he was faithful and obedient to tell you all that you have in Christ but also to warn and encourage and exhort that it's hard that it's normal this church this church you are a base on the battlefield you have what you need to be prepared to be equipped and to be strengthened in whatever battle you face now or whatever battle you will face in the future you have a victorious savior a victorious lord a victorious shepherd who will fight for you when you come each week to be fed maybe you're going into the infirmary and you need to be bandaged up because you've been dinged around a little bit or maybe there's a major wound maybe you need to reload the weaponry maybe you need to review the battle plan prepare for the next battle some of you are seasoned and you're generals and you need to come and you need to prepare the younger privates some of you are in boot camp and you're just starting to work out your faith muscles to get prepared for the war so that's where these other officers wherever you're at and whatever maturity you need to think of this is a troop and we're going into it together and we need each other because this church is changing it's going through transition right now that's a part of life and we praise

God for everything that is happening there's movement happening there's great opportunities now within this troop specifically to step up to the plate to help one another to find areas where you can grow and if I would be an encouragement I would just say get together and start asking one another what's your battle you're facing right now and how can I walk with you how can I get to know you a little!

How can I help your faith? How can you build one another up?

Well let's end in Romans 8 I'm not stealing thunder this is remember this is the preparation for Romans 8 this is the forward looking to that you are going to be putting death to the deeds of the flesh but you are also conforming to the son but here's what Paul says in verse 37 but in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us but in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loves us for I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of

[63:11] God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord let's pray Father Lord do you know this church and you love this church more than any human being could ever know or love you are a perfect shepherd you know the hearts of every single person here whether they know you or not and if there's those who do not know you Father I pray that you would save them that they would become your sheep they become your child that they would know that there's a God in heaven who fights for them Father

I pray for this church I pray for each battle right now that each and every person every couple every household every ministry that they're walking through at this point in this moment it's not a matter of if it's a matter of what so Father would you be present with them in that battle would you help them fight the good fight of faith would you help them stand strong would you help them to believe your promises your truth and your word would you help them put on the armor that you have provided to stand and Father would you fight would you make your glory known as the king of glory as you fight for your people because we know that in Christ and in you we overwhelmingly conquer!

Would you grow and you would you mature this body would you make them to be the light to the world because they have the truth the world needs would this be an intimate group would this be a very encouraging convicting strengthening troop on the battlefield that even other churches that are weary other Christians that are in the fight and they don't know where to turn to would you bring them here to find rest to find help and to find strength in the midst of the battle father would you prepare this church for all of the glorious work that you are going to give them would that equal more souls being saved more believers coming into the life of the church more sent ones going out into the world to proclaim the gospel more churches being planted more pastors being sent father

would you get glory we ask all of this in the name of the one who fights for us the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we ask amen