



## Soldiers of Christ Arise!

### ► Introduction:

- I. This last Wednesday we honored our veterans for their service and their dedication to our country and our way of life.
  - A. Wednesday morning our homeschool families had a reception to honor our veterans here at Washington Avenue.
  - B. To those that served and are serving, the rest of us need to express our gratitude and deep appreciation, whether you served for years in the military or possibly just a short period of time.
  - C. You indeed deserve our praise for what you have accomplished!

### ► II. When thinking of our veterans this week and also thinking about this sermon, I thought that I would direct our thinking this morning to our Christian warfare.

- A. The word veteran is defined as someone who **has** served in a military force, especially one who has fought in a war.
  1. We might say that someone is a veteran of World War II (not as many as there use to be), someone might be a Korean veteran, or Vietnam veteran, and now an Iraq or Afghanistan veteran.
  2. They are individuals that have had experience in their past with the armed services.

### ► B. Now, with that in mind, I want us to recognize that there are no Christian veterans on this earth!

1. Can I say that again for emphasis? There are no Christian veterans on this earth.
2. Remember, a veteran is someone that in the past served in the military!
3. All living Christians today are still in active service! There is no such thing as retired Christian soldiers on this side of eternity.

▶ III. We sang the song just a few moments ago entitled: "Soldiers of Christ Arise!"

"Soldiers of Christ arise And put your armor on;  
Strong in the strength which God supplies, Thru His beloved Son.

Strong in the Lord of hosts And in His mighty power,  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts, Is more than conqueror.

Stand, then, in His great might, With all His strength endued,  
But take, to arm you for the fight, The panoply of God.

Leave no unguarded place, No weakness of the soul;  
Take every virtue, every grace, And fortify the whole.

That having all things done, And all your conflicts past,  
You may o'er come thru Christ alone, And stand entire at last.

*Words by Charles Wesley, music by Wm. B. Bradbury.*

- A. This song is about preparing ourselves for the battles of this world.
1. We have indeed been blessed for many years in this country with freedoms that are very unique and really not even known or understood in other countries.
  2. Yet, we are still in a battle. Paul relates that our Battle is fought on this earth however our true enemy is more than just physical.

Ephesians 6:12

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

- B. Therefore, are you ready for the harsh and difficult reality of being a Christian soldier?

1. Peter related that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion “seeking whom he may devour.” (I Peter 5:8)
2. But let us also remember that if we prepare ourselves properly as Christian soldiers then we will have peace, love, and joy because we know of the victory that is found in Christ.

IV. In our lesson today, I would want us to notice our Christian warfare and what we must do to properly be “Soldiers of Christ!”

Text:

Ephesians 6:10-20

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Discussion:

- ▶ I. From our text we recognize that every Christian soldier must recognize and accept their charge! (10-11)
  - A. We are called to be “strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.” (10)
    1. As soldiers of Christ we must possess power, might, and strength!
    2. But pay attention, this strength is not from physical might or power but rather strength that is found in our Lord!

3. When we get into the heat of battle with this world, we must remember that we have the power to Deity to overcome.

Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

- B. So, to gain this spiritual strength then we are to put on the whole armor of God. (11)

1. This is also our charge from God!
2. Notice that is a directive from our Lord that we are to fulfill. Our spiritual strength comes from the Lord however we must be willing to go into battle.
3. Once a Christian is willing to be strong in the Lord then he begins to arm himself with God’s armor.
4. And recognize that we must put on the whole armor of God.
  - a. If we leave off any of God’s armor then we are exposing our weaknesses to our enemy.
  - b. Let us take the whole armor of God

▶ II. As Christian soldiers we must also know how to recognize our enemy.

- A. Paul relates that our enemy, the devil, is not physical but spiritual. (12)

1. Paul lists several thoughts concerning our enemy; they are principalities, powers, rulers of darkness. But then he relates that our enemy is a spiritual host of wickedness.
2. We mentioned earlier the description that Peter offers to us about our enemy.

I Peter 5:8

“...your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

3. Jesus in talking about the Jews, parallel them with the devil and this gives us insight into the traits of our enemy.

John 8:44

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

- a. Our enemy is a murderer.
- b. He does not stand for truth.
- c. He is a liar and the father of all liars.

B. We must also recognize that the devil has strategies in his attempts to defeat us!

- 1. Earlier in verse eleven (11) Paul relates that Satan has “wiles” and we are to stand against them.
  - a. The Greek word for wiles (μεθοδεῖα - me-tho-dā'-ä) means: “cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery.”
  - b. The devil has a plan to defeat us and it is our responsibility not to fall to his plan.
- 2. And what are his strategies:
  - a. He is the master of deception.
  - b. He is the father of liars. (John 8:44)
  - c. He sets ambushes against us. Peter states it is a lion. (I Peter 5:8) Have you ever noticed how lions stock their prey and then completely unexpected they pounce upon them.
  - d. Paul relates that Satan recruits others to help him.

II Corinthians 11:13-15

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

- e. And Satan is always looking for the advantage therefore Paul encourages us to not be ignorant of his devices. (II Corinthians 2:11)

▶ III. So we recognize our adversary and we understand he has plans to defeat us, therefore we must be willing to fight against his evil. (12)

A. We indeed must rise up as Christian soldiers because we are in a war.

1. Good leaders in the military indeed recognize when there is a threat and the need to go into battle.

a. The enemy will have an easy victory is one never recognizes the threat against them.

b. The great city of Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians because the Babylonians did not see them as a threat. (Daniel 5)

2. As Christians we must recognize the threat against us and be ready for battle.

a. Paul encourages Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith...” (I Timothy 6:12)

b. And then later Paul again relates to Timothy that he “must endure as a good soldier” pleasing the one “who enlisted him as a soldier.” (II Timothy 2:3-4)

B. Yet, our warfare will not be won with physical tools; like swords or shields, nor bombs and planes. Our battle is spiritual.

1. Jesus related to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world because if it was his servants would have fought to protect him. (John 18:36)

2. Paul related that our weapons for this war are not carnal (physical weapons) but they are mighty and from God.

C. So, we must recognize the battle that is before us because our enemies are very powerful which is suggested by the words: “principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, hosts of wickedness. (12)

▶ IV. So what is our duty as soldiers of Christ?

A. First, we must “take on the whole armor of God.” (13)

1. As Christians we made the commitment to Christ when we were baptized to live and serve him.
  2. Therefore we must be willing to battle for the Lord's cause.
  3. Only a soldier that is willing to go into battle will put on his armor!
- B. Secondly, we must be "able to withstand in the evil day." (13)
1. Our duty is to resist and overcome the exploits of the devil.
  2. To do this we need the whole armor of God.
- C. So it is our duty to the armor of God and with our armor we withstand Satan and also "stand" firm for Christ. (13)
1. There are times when we must draw the line of defense and make our stand... We must recognize what is right and wrong and stand firm on what is the right thing to do.
  2. Paul encourages us to be steadfast and immovable.
- I Corinthians 15:58  
 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

▶ V. So what is the armor of God that we wear as soldiers of Christ?

▶ A. We must girdle ourselves with Truth! (14)

1. Scholars suggest that the girdle was part of the soldiers held everything else together.
2. Therefore as a Christian soldier it is imperative we abide in Truth because without it the rest of our lives and our service to the Lord will fall apart.
3. Let us be honest and truthful in every aspect of our lives!

▶ B. We must have the "breastplate of Righteousness." (14)

1. The breastplate on a soldier protects his heart.

2. The Christian ought to have the righteousness of God reigning within his heart and when this is done then indeed his heart will be protected from the influence of this world.

▶ C. The Lord's armor is also made up of sandals prepared with the Gospel of Peace. (15)

1. Sandals were a sign of readiness! When you have your sandals (army boots) then you are ready to march and go into battle.
2. Plus, your feet are stable and you are not apt to slip or lose your balance.
3. Christians who adhere to the Gospel of Christ will be ready for battle plus you will be stable as you go into the world.

▶ D. The Lord's soldier will carry a broad shield of faith. (16)

1. Shields provided protect from the arrows, spears, and swords of the enemy.
2. And in the same manner, when I am well established with my personal faith, based upon God's Word, then such belief and faith will protect me from the assault of evil that is prevalent in this world.

▶ E. Every Christian must have the helmet of salvation. (17)

1. The head of a soldier controls every other aspect of his body physically and cognitive abilities. Therefore it is of extreme important that he protects his head from harm.
2. As a Christian we must protect our mind and our thoughts, we must control our actions with temperance and patience.
3. We must make sure that we keep our focus (minds) upon our Leader who offers us salvation and encourage us to strive continually forward unto we reach the Lord's victory.

Romans 12:2

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

▶ F. And our last piece of our Christian armor is the "Sword of the Spirit." (17)

1. A soldier uses his sword as both an defensive and offensive weapon.
  - a. While in the fight a sword can be used to redirect the assault and blows of the enemy.
  - b. Yet, it is also used offensively in attempting the destroy one's opponent.
2. Paul relates that the "Sword of the Spirit" is God's Word.
  - a. Therefore we understand that God's Word can redirect the advancements of Satan and keeping us from falling.
  - b. It can also a powerful offensively weapon that will defeat Satan.
  - c. When Satan directed his assault upon the Lord Himself he defeated Satan with the Word of God. (Matthew 4:3-11; Luke 4:1-13)
3. Every Christian soldier must use the very Message of God as our source to defeat everything that is against Lord.

G. So let us make sure that we indeed have the full armor of God.

1. Let us be truthful at all times.
2. Let godly righteousness come from our hearts.
3. Ready to advance the Gospel of Christ.
4. Protecting ourselves with our faith.
5. Accepting the Lord's salvation with all knowledge of the Truth.
6. And properly using the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God!

▶ VI. Soldiers need provisions and this is true for the Christian soldiers as well. (18-20)

- A. As Christians we have the absolutely marvelous opportunity to speak directly to our Lord who is able to provide all our needs.
- B. So even in the most difficult times when it seems that there is no way to be successful, recognize that we can contact our Commander and chief and know that He will listen to us and give us all that we truly need.

Philippians 4:6

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;"

- C. We as Christian soldiers have the provision of prayer, let us continually pray to our Lord and Creator!

Conclusion:

- I. In war, people are lost.
  - A. Many of you remember Al Autieri from a few years ago.
    - 1. Al was a captain in the army during World War II and he fought in the battle of the bulge.
    - 2. He attempted to relate to me on one occasion the difficult and harsh conditions in which he was fighting.
    - 3. Friends, in that historic battle, Al related to me with tears in his eyes that he lost every man under his command.
  - B. Sadly, in war there are casualties.
- II. In the Christian's warfare, sadly, casualties occur as well. There are times with individuals make the choice to abandon the fight and step away from the Lord's cause.
  - A. And their loss is much more costly because of the eternal consequences that are a result.
  - B. Yet, for the Christian that patiently endures and continues his battle each and every day, then God promises that when they became a true Christian veteran their position will be with Him in Heaven forever.

Revelation 2:10

"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

- III. It is our desire as Christian soldiers to be forever faithful to our Lord, Jesus Christ and recruit others to join the battle with us.

- A. Becoming part of the Lord's army means that we accept that Jesus paid the price for our sins with His marvelous mercy and grace.
- B. Joining the fight means that you will develop a faith in Him and His Word so that you indeed will honor and obey His directives.
  - 1. He directs us to repent from sin.
  - 2. He directs us to confess commitment to Him and others as our Savior and Lord.
  - 3. And Jesus commands that we be baptized (immersed) in water to be become His and be saved!
- C. This morning if you desire to join the fight for Christ, then why not submit to His will.
- D. If you are a Christian yet given up the battle.
  - 1. Why not return to post and re-establishing our loyalty to Lord.
  - 2. We are more than willing to pray to God on your behalf!
- E. If you need us to pray for you and with you this morning because life (the battle) seems to be really difficult right now, then by all means we are here for you.

If we can assist you please let us know as we stand and sing!