

(Ephesians) Spiritual Warfare

by Brian Brodersen

Brian Brodersen's sermon on spiritual warfare emphasizes the reality of the battle against evil forces and the importance of equipping oneself with the armor of God.

Duration: 55:42

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Prayer Power"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of immersing ourselves in prayer, the Word of God, and worship. By doing so, we can individually walk in victory and contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom. The speaker also references the story of Daniel, who prayed and fasted for three weeks before receiving a message from a heavenly messenger. This story highlights the reality of a hidden spiritual battle that is taking place around us. The speaker encourages listeners to recognize this battle and rely on God's strength to be victorious against it.

Transcript

Amen. Let's turn to Ephesians chapter six. Tonight, we're going to be looking at verses 10 through 13.

And as I mentioned last week, we're going to jump into another one of those series within a series like we did with the marriage and family. This series will be on the subject of spiritual warfare and will probably go six or eight weeks with this series. And I hope you'll be encouraged through it.

So let's read Ephesians 6, 10 through 13. Paul says, 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 host 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. We come now really to the final section of this great epistle to the Ephesians and to a most important. And yet often neglected subject, the subject of spiritual warfare, the Christian life that we've been studying.

That life in the spirit, that life of walking in the spirit in all of our various relationships is not lived in a vacuum. It's not just a matter of this is what God has done for you. So this is what you're to do in

response.

There's another factor that we must consider, namely the mighty opposition to the Christian faith and to living the Christian life that we all inevitably face in this world. Opposition that comes from the devil and a multitude of wicked spirits who have set themselves against God and against those who serve God. This opposition is seen in a million different.

Situations, but they're all connected. We see it in everything from churches being bombed in Pakistan and Indonesia. To the murder of kidnapped missionary Martin Burnham in the Philippines, to the imprisonment of church leaders.

In communist China to the US judicial system stand against the display of the Ten Commandments or a cross on public property to Hollywood and the media's constant assault upon the church and biblical standards of morality to the scientific communities, irrational hatred of the idea of divine creation as an explanation of life. To the persecution that comes your way at work or from your family because of your faith in Jesus Christ, to the confusion and doubt that sometimes comes upon your mind as you attempt to study your Bible, to the distractions that bombard you while you're trying to pray, to the fear that seizes you when opportunities to share your faith arise, to the battle that often ensues when you attempt to come to church. These things are all part of what can be called spiritual warfare.

One of the enemy's most effective strategies is to keep us ignorant of the existence of this warfare. If he can just keep us in the dark on this, he's really, to some degree, got an advantage over us. And that's what he seeks to do.

He seeks to keep us ignorant of the reality of this warfare. C.S. Lewis said something interesting in this regard. He said there are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils.

One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

Among Christians, we often find two similar positions. There are those within the church who downplay the activity of the devil to the point that even if he really does exist, the average Christian will never know by experience any opposition from him. That's one position that you can find quite predominant in the church.

There is another position, it's really the other extreme, and that's a position that sees the devil and demons behind every difficulty, failure and annoyance in life. These are the people that when they sin, they say the devil made me do it. Or when they have any kind of difficulty or any sort of annoyance in life, they say the devil did it to me.

But these are equally wrong positions. Our purpose in this study is to introduce you to the reality of this great conflict. That we as Christians are in to give you a biblical perspective on it and to equip you to wage a good warfare as a good soldier of Jesus Christ so that when it's all said and done, you can say, as Paul said, I have fought the good fight.

I finished my course. I have kept the faith. And so as we begin this series, we need to begin by, first of all, getting an understanding of who it is that is opposing us, getting a bit of insight into our adversary.

And so we start, of course, with the devil. We're all familiar with the devil, at least by name or by title, really, that the word devil is more of a title than a name. But I don't think we're really all that familiar with his activity.

His involvement in our lives. He's involved. He's working against us.

Well, perhaps not. Him personally in our lives, but he's got many who work for him and they all are very similar to one another, and we want to consider, first of all, this evening, the devil and his forces. But looking, first of all, at the devil, who is he? Well, the names given to him in scripture or the titles referring to him, they give us great insight into who he is.

The word devil actually means slanderer. And that, of course, is his primary occupation to slander God. To go out of his way to try to bring to people a misrepresentation of God.

He's also called the accuser. We know from scripture that he accuses the brethren. He accuses us before God day and night, we're told.

He is referred to as the tempter. And that is part of his activity as well. He tempts us to do evil.

He tempts us to disbelieve God and to follow his example and rebel against God. He is known as the adversary. Because he is our enemy, he is against us, he is against God and all that God is doing, all that God loves, and because God loves us, he's against us.

He is referred to as the father of lies, meaning that lying originated with him. He is the father of lies. He's the source from which deceit sprang forth.

He is referred to as the murderer. He is the source from which murder sprang forth. He is the first murderer and the inspiration behind murder.

He's called the God of this age. Because he actually is the one who has dominion at the present time over this world. He's referred to as the prince of demons, meaning that he's the head over them.

He rules over them. He is called the prince of the power of the air. Referring to his influence throughout the universe, he's actually called the ruler of this world.

On one occasion, he is spoken of as the evil one. And he is evil to his very core. He is also called the wicked one.

He's referred to as the serpent and the dragon. So this one we commonly call the devil to sum it up. He is the enemy of God and the deceiver and the oppressor of man.

Now, the question then arises, what is he? Is he a person? Is he a human being? Is he just some sort of an evil presence or influence? But we see clearly that he is a person. He's not a person in the human sense, but he's obviously a person. He's referred to not as an it, an essence or just sort of a force.

The idea of the force, for example, in Star Wars is not the equivalent of what the devil or Satan is, because Satan is actually a person. He is a person. He is a fallen angel.

He is a fallen angel. He seems to have been the greatest of all of God's creatures. Based on certain things that are said in Scripture, he is exceedingly powerful.

His power is second only to that of God himself. He is incredibly intelligent. He's brilliant.

On an intellectual level, he is thoroughly and irrevocably evil. He is the personification of evil. He is evil to the very core of his being.

And evil to the extent that there is no possibility whatsoever of any change from that condition. And then he is the commander in chief of a multitude of creatures similar to himself. Similar to himself, but yet not having the power that he possesses.

He has the greatest power among those creatures. Ezekiel in the 28th chapter was given insight into this person and listen to what Ezekiel penned under inspiration of the spirit. He said you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God, and every precious stone was your covering. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers.

I established you. You were on the holy mountain of God. You walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones.

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created till iniquity was found in you. You became filled with violence within and you said, therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God and I destroyed you covering cherub from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty.

You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. So this is insight that's given to us, and this is where we see that this person that we're referring to, Satan, was seemingly the greatest of all God's creatures. As he said here, you were the seal of perfection.

You were the sum of it, the fullness of it. But this creature. Who was made.

In that highest position of all. Of the created order at a point in time, rebelled against God in the 14th chapter of Isaiah. Gives us insight into the fall, actually, of Lucifer from heaven.

If you turn there with me, Isaiah chapter 14, Isaiah chapter 14. Let's look in verse 12. How are you fallen from heaven? Oh, Lucifer, son of the morning, how are you cut down to the ground? You who weakened the nations for you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven.

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will also sit on the mound of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.

I will be like the most high. And so this glorious creature. This greatest of all God's.

Created order is not content with his station that God has appointed to him, but he seeks to elevate himself above God, and this is what brings his fall. And this is what takes him from being the anointed cherub that covers to the devil. To Satan, he is, as I've already pointed out.

The leader of this great rebellion that occurred in heaven so long ago, but is still going on today. Now, we read here in Paul's epistle about the principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and the spiritual host of wickedness in heavenly places. Here, Paul doesn't specifically pinpoint Satan, but he's

obviously included in all that's mentioned there.

But back in the second chapter of Ephesians, a long time ago when we were in chapter two, we considered Satan a bit. Paul referred to him there as the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. But here, really, he describes.

That whole. Orderly system of opposition to God that exists in the invisible realm, and the picture that Paul is painting for us is a picture of governmental structure with various ranks. Satan and his forces are not a ragtag, haphazard, disorganized group of disgruntled angels.

They are really a highly organized force of depraved, iniquitous spirits, powerful spirits, highly organized in their effort and their attempt to overthrow God and his plan. And that's who Paul tells us that we are contending with. That's who he wants us to remember that we are battling against now, he mentions here principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, just to give you a little bit of an idea of what he's talking about.

A principality. Is is actually a state that's ruled by a prince or it can refer to a prince who governs a certain geographical area. So when Paul describes these forces as, first of all, principalities, he wants us to understand that the forces that we're battling against are forces that control the world that we presently live in, the world that we presently live in, in the spiritual realm is divided up, just like it's divided up in the natural realm.

Our world is divided up between. Countries. States are divided, countries are divided up between states or provinces or whatever, but, you know, we have a world that's divided tonight into various countries, some of them are friendly toward one another, some of them are opposed to each other.

But the picture that we have of the world as it has existed as a divided world is the picture not only in the natural realm, but it's a picture in the spiritual realm as well. And there are these forces, these. Magistrates that rule the world from behind the scenes in the 10th chapter of Daniel, we get an incredible picture into this reality.

Daniel is praying, God has revealed to him that there are 77 year periods determined upon the nation of Israel, and so Daniel immediately goes to prayer about the implication of that revelation that he received and he's praying and fasting and waiting upon God and for three full weeks. He has no sense that God is speaking to him or are, you know, revealing his will to him. And after this period of 21 days, suddenly a messenger from heaven comes to Daniel and Daniel is frightened by his presence and he falls down before him and he the messenger comforts him and says, don't be afraid.

You're a man greatly beloved and I've been sent to speak to you. And then he says an interesting thing. He says, from the first day that you began.

To present your request before God, I was dispatched to come to you, but the prince of Persia resisted me. And if it weren't for Michael, your prince, the prince over Israel, I would have still been detained, but Michael came and liberated me so that I could come and bring this message to you. What we realize from that bit of information that were given there in Daniel, Chapter 10, is that there is a spiritual battle.

There's an invisible battle. And these forces that rule over various regions are waging a warfare in the spiritual realm. The prince of Persia was not the man who was ruling over Persia at the time, but the spirit that was controlling the throne of Persia.

And as Daniel continues in this conversation with this messenger, as he's about to depart, he says, I'm going to leave. I must return for the prince of Greece is coming and I must battle with him as well. And so the point that I'm making is that what we learn from these various portions of scripture is that.

There is an intense battle going on all around us, yet it's hidden from our eyes because it's taking place in the spiritual realm. But Paul wants us to understand that it exists and he wants us to be equipped to be victorious against it, because it's not just a battle going on in the invisible realm, it has an impact on the material realm.

It has an impact on the physical realm. It actually has an impact on our lives as God's people. Now, we see, as I've already pointed out, a variety of manifestations of it.

We look around and, you know, the older I get and the longer I walk with the Lord, I just more and more see everything in the world as a spiritual battle. So many things that at one time seemed political or, you know, so social or whatever they might have seemed at the time, it seems like the further we go in history and the closer we get to the end of time, just, you know, that that covering is sort of being stripped away and we're starting to see what's at the root of everything that's going on. It's this battle.

It's a rebellion against God. And we're seeing it more and more clearly, but it's not just on the international level or the level of national politics or policy or educational processes, it's not just in that realm. It's definitely there, but it comes down and it actually touches us personally as well.

And that's what we need to realize. We need to understand that and Paul uses a term that makes that clear to us when he uses the term wrestle. Notice what he says here, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

Now, there are two aspects to this war. There is the aspect of the collective forces of God battling the collective forces of Satan, and that's what we're talking about. That's being depicted there in the 10th chapter of Daniel.

That's that behind the scenes picture where God's servants, the angels are battling against the principalities, the powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world. But then there's another aspect to it as well, and that's the personal hand to hand combat between individual. Soldiers, that's where it comes down to a battle that we're participating in as well, we are personally under attack.

Some people say, well, you know, why would the devil bother me? The devil is a thug. Do thugs ever need reasons to bother people? They don't. That's just what they do.

And that's just what he does. Ever since man was created, he's just been harassing man. But he particularly harasses those who rebel against him and stand with God.

So he's got a particular beef with you because you've done that. And it doesn't matter what you think of yourself, you might think, oh, I'm just an insignificant person, I'm no threat just because you're a believer. You are more of a threat than you realize.

He knows that. But it's because you're a child of God that he is out to get you. He's against you and we all of us in varying degrees from time to time come under the direct attack of the enemy.

You know, I was thinking about this today and, you know, there are those times and and I was thinking of that whole, you know, just the picture of of a thug, a mobster, a gangster kind of a person. Or I was actually thinking more about like the SS back under the Nazi regime or the KGB when the communists were ruling there in Russia or even the terrorists today. They're just thugs and they, you know, they pull people out of their cars and beat them to death or they, you know, they just pull out a gun and blow people away or they just go about causing mayhem and destruction.

And, you know, that's the picture, and we've all had those kinds of experiences, haven't we? But so often we don't realize what it is. But just those times where all of a sudden, just seemingly out of nowhere for no reason whatsoever, we're just hit with something. It's like we're just busted over the head with something and.

We're confused and we're fearful and we're starting to doubt and, you know, or we're radically tempted and we think, well, what's happening here? You see, that's all part of coming under attack. I think of Job's situation is illustrating this whole thing so clearly. You remember, Job was a righteous man, he was a godly man.

As a matter of fact, God testified concerning Job that there wasn't a man like him in all the world. And it says that when the sons of God were appearing one day before the Lord, Satan appeared as well. And the Lord said to Satan, where have you been? And he said, oh, I've just been down in the earth.

Walking to and fro. God said, have you noticed Job, my servant? And Satan said, oh, yeah, I've seen him. And the interesting thing is Satan had been observing Job.

And actually, in his observation, he had been planning a strategy to try to bring him down. God said, have you observed my servant Job? He said, oh, yes, but I've noticed that you have a hedge about him. So I can't get to him.

And, you know, he went on to describe what he understood about Job based upon his observation. I don't think that just happened with Job. I don't think he's the only one in history that ever was scrutinized by Satan, studied by Satan in order to develop a strategy against him.

I think that's what happens to all of us to some degree or another. Think of Peter, what Jesus said to Peter. You remember he said, Simon, Simon, Satan has desired you.

He has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat. And I think Satan had probably a similar encounter with God about Peter. Where have you been? Oh, just down there in Israel.

You notice my servant Peter. Oh, yes, I'd like to have him. Let me sift him as wheat.

But Jesus said, I've prayed for you, but Satan watches. And I think even as a stalker, he stalks us and he's looking for those weaknesses and he's looking for that vulnerable place and he's looking for that appropriate time to come in and to attack us. That's the world we live in.

That's what we're up against as Christian people today. And again, I emphasize there's not a one of us that are excluded from this sort of a thing because Satan is against everyone who is for God. And he's going to do everything in his power to try to undermine what God is doing in your life, to try to neutralize you and to keep you from effective service for the Lord, to try to prevent you from living a life to the glory of God.

You see, that's why Paul goes into this. He's been talking about the Christian life and he's been telling us how we are to live it. He laid out beautifully for us all that God had done for us.

And then he called us to respond and to serve. But Paul recognizes that that's not as simple as just, hey, go do this now. He recognizes that for everyone who seeks to follow and serve the Lord, there's going to be opposition.

And so he warns us about it and he tells us that there is a way to victory. But he talks about wrestling, and I want to once again just emphasize the intimate nature of this. It's a battle.

It's a personal battle and you might not realize it. And oftentimes I find that this is the case. We don't realize what it is that's going on, but Satan is at work.

But he's very subtle, he's very sly, you know, he doesn't come up and say, I'm the devil, I'm here to destroy you. What do you think about that? He comes much more subtly than that. And I have found so many times that I've been under attack and yet.

Time has gone by before I finally realized what was going on. And then the lights go on, it suddenly flashes, this is the enemy, and there are so many different ways. And as we go through our series here, we'll consider the many different ways that he will attack us.

But I wonder, do we realize that when we're being harassed because of our faith, that Satan is behind it? Paul says we wrestle not against flesh and blood. What he's trying to get us to understand is that the people who are attacking us are not really, truly our enemies. There's somebody who's inspiring and manipulating them.

There's someone who's controlling them and using them. So the battle is not really against flesh and blood. It's against these spiritual beings.

So you see, if I if I think it's merely against flesh and blood and I try to deal with the flesh and blood, I'm never going to be successful. I've got to get to the source behind, I've got to get to the inspiration, I've got to get to that influence and knock it out there.

That's where we come to understand that in order to be victorious in this spiritual battle, we've got to have spiritual weapons. I can't fight the devil or his forces physically, no matter how strong I might be. You know, the toughest man on earth is an absolute weakling in the presence of the demonic powers.

Do we realize when we sit down to read our Bibles and our minds are filled with confusion and doubt and even at times wicked thoughts and blasphemous suggestions, do we realize what's happening? Do we understand that this is part of the devil's activity when we try to pray and we're bombarded with distractions? Do we sense that the evil one is trying to disrupt what's going on? Do we understand that that's what's occurring at that time or when we're stepping out to serve the Lord in some way and we're suddenly seized with fear? Do we understand that that's a tactic of the enemy to try to keep us back from going ahead in our service to the Lord? Do we realize when we're planning to come to fellowship and all hell is breaking loose around our homes or in the car on the way here? So that by the time we get to church, we're so in the flesh, we feel ashamed to walk through the doors. Do we realize what's happening there? You see, those are all parts of the real battle that we're in, that spiritual battle. It's all included there in the wrestling, not against flesh and blood.

Now, what do we do? And we're going to spend a whole lot of time on talking about a number of things in regard to contending with the enemy and having victory over the enemy and so forth. But we want to just touch on it briefly this evening. Paul tells us here in verse 10, he says, Brethren.

Be strong in the Lord. And in the power of his might, and this is really the secret to victory, this is where it all begins, this is where victory stems from, it stems from drawing upon God's strength, remembering that God is with us, that God will empower us.

That God is the captain. Of our salvation and that he wants to equip us to be victorious in this battle, and so Paul said, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. It reminds me of David in his battle with Goliath.

This monster of a man, this man who is no doubt fully possessed of the devil, a vicious, murderous beast of a man. And here's this young boy. He was no doubt a scrappy young guy, but.

He wasn't any match for Goliath in himself, and he knew that he understood that, and as he stood across from Goliath and heard those blasphemous threats hurled at him. He responded to Goliath, you come against me with a sword and with a spear, but I come against you today in the name of the living God whom you have defied. And I'm going to destroy you because the battle is the Lord's and he'll give me the victory.

David exemplified for us what Paul is talking about here, he fell back on that reality, the battle belongs to the Lord. And we have got to fall back on that reality over and over again, the battle belongs to the Lord. God will supply us with the strength that we need to be victorious, and we've got to learn to lean on him.

We've got to recognize what's happening, when it's happening, we've got to see beyond the flesh and blood that might be the instrument that Satan is using. We've got to see the inspiration, the source behind the activity, and then we've got to go at it with those things that God gives us. And that brings us to the need for spiritual weapons in writing to the Corinthians in the 10th chapter of 2nd Corinthians.

Paul said, although we walk after the flesh, meaning although we live in a body of flesh and blood, although we are living here on planet Earth. Although we are here in the material realm, although we walk according to the flesh, he said, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare, he said, are not carnal or merely human, but they're mighty in God for pulling down strongholds and casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

They're not carnal, they're not merely human. You know, I think of so many things that people are dealing with that are really spiritual in nature, but they're they're trying to deal with it with merely human weapons. I think of the people whose lives are being devastated through bondage to some sin, and instead of looking for that spiritual weapon through which to conquer this thing, they're drawing upon instruments that are merely human.

They're going to man and seeking man's wisdom, man's advice, man's program to conquer over these life dominating sins, but it'll never happen. They need power, they need spiritual power. The weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they're mighty in God, what are those weapons? Well, they are the things that we're all familiar with, the things that we all know about, but the things that we don't always lean upon or utilize to the full extent that we should, they are, first of all, prayer.

Prayer is one of those weapons that are mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds. There are many strongholds around us. Strongholds in our lives, personally, strongholds in our fellowship, strongholds in our community, strongholds in our country, strongholds in our world.

Now, how do we deal with these things? Well, we can take human measures and try to deal with them, but as we see, we don't really get too far. We don't make much progress. I think of all of the efforts that have been put forth over the years by well-meaning Christians to turn the country around through.

Using, you know, the the various processes of government and, you know, those kinds of things, and yet things just continue to go from bad to worse. And I wonder if instead of exerting all of that energy and protesting or trying to force in legislation or all of those kinds of things that people sometimes spend all of their efforts on. I wonder if we put the same amount of effort into prayer that has gone to those things, if we wouldn't be a lot further down the road toward a better society.

But how is it that we have this great and mighty weapon of prayer, but we don't use it? Well, that's where the battle comes in again, isn't it? Because we get distracted from prayer, we get discouraged from prayer, we become weary in prayer. And we give up on prayer. And of course, if prayer is a great weapon, you're going to understand why Satan is going to seek with everything in him to keep us from doing it.

Have you ever had the experience of going to prayer and then all of the sudden numerous distractions just seem to arise out of nowhere? Have you ever had the experience of going to prayer? Wide awake and. A couple of minutes into prayer, you can't even keep your eyes open, feel like you've been drugged or something. Or have you had those experiences where you're going to prayer and suddenly as you start to move in a direction, your mind is just thrown into a state of confusion, you can't even think clearly, you can't really focus your direction in your prayer.

See, that's all part of Satan's work to keep you from doing the very thing that will undo so much of what he's doing. And so if we're going to have a victory. It's going to come through the weapons that are mighty in God, the weapon of prayer, secondly, the weapon of the word of God, the word of God and faith in the word of God, standing upon the word of God and in our own lives as we have these conflicts that are going on, as we have the the attack upon us, sometimes in the form of temptation that comes our way or something like that.

That's where we stand upon God's word, we take him at his word and we submit ourself to his word. And as we do that, we find that we have victory, we believe what God has said, and as we stand upon his promises, as we meditate upon his word and is changing our lives and we're just committing ourselves to it. What we're doing is we're being strengthened and we're we're gaining victory as we go into situations and we apply the word of God to the situation.

The word of God is living and powerful, and as the word of God is applied to a situation, God breaks that stronghold. He liberates those who are captive, but then, you know, another one of those weapons that are mighty in God is the weapon of worship. And I don't think we normally think of worship as a weapon, but we have a biblical basis for seeing worship as a weapon.

And I was thinking of that tonight as we were worshipping the Lord. This is one of our weapons. When God is exalted, when he's being magnified and praised, God moves and he scatters his enemies.

And I think of the battle that's recorded in Second Chronicles, the battle with King Jehoshaphat and the Moabites and the Ammonites as they came against Jehoshaphat. And he was radically outnumbered and he was dreadfully afraid and he cried out to the Lord. Lord, what do we do? And a prophet spoke up and said, this is what you do.

Believe the word of God, trust in the Lord. And then he said, and send forth the worshipers. Send them ahead of you into the battle, and as they begin to worship, God would scatter his enemies and Jehoshaphat and his army never even needed to fight.

God took care of it himself as the people began to worship him. And as I read over that, I just got that picture of as we are praising God, as we're worshipping him, the Lord is scattering his enemies. He's bringing confusion into their plans.

And he's breaking those strongholds and he's bringing us into the realm of victory. Victory. And so these are the things, of course, we're going to elaborate on these in the weeks to come, we'll consider them more fully.

But just to give you something to, you know, work with from from this point, these are the things that we've got to bring into our lives in a fuller sense. These are things that we've got to be steeped in, immersed in prayer and the word of God and worship. And as we immerse ourselves in these things, we will find that we individually will walk in victory.

And as we individually walk in victory, then that will lead to collective victory. And the advancement of God's kingdom. And so often what God does is he works in the life of one person and he inspires people through that person.

He sort of sets an example or a standard with that person that other people can look to and follow. You might be that person that God wants to use. I think of Jonathan, how he took that step of faith and he went against the Philistine army, just he and his armor bearer, and how they obtained this great victory.

Partially because when the rest of the army saw them having victory, they were inspired and they came alongside and a greater victory even resulted from it. Jonathan took the word of God. And he believed it.

He had faith in it and he acted upon it. And that's what we must do, each one of us individually committing ourselves to prayer, to God's word and trusting in his word, committing ourselves to worshipping him. And as we do this, we will find that we will be victorious in the spiritual battle.

We'll find that when we are attacked by Satan, which we will be, that instead of falling under his assault, we'll rise up over him and have victory and he'll flee. People are falling right and left. I don't know if you've noticed that or not, but it's just.

It's amazing to me how many people are losing in this spiritual battle, but I think it's because of one or two things. Either they haven't realized that they are in a battle or maybe haven't known it at one time. They have forgotten it.

But this is something that we have got to get fixed in our minds. This is what the Christian life is. It's a battle.

It's nothing less than a battle. And Paul uses military terminology over and over again in his epistles as he's communicating to us. The weapons of our warfare, we wrestle not fight the good fight.

Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and these kinds of things, these are all militaristic metaphors that Paul is using because he's wanting us to understand that the Christian life in this world, among other things, is a battle. Predominantly, it's a battle. Probably more than anything else, it's a battle.

And if we don't see it as a battle. Then we'll be among the first casualties. If you don't know you're in a war, you're not going to do anything to protect yourself.

You're going to get picked off. So we've got to know that we're in a war. We've got to see the world through that biblical lens that this is.

A time of great conflict, let me read to you from A.W. Tozer, he has a chapter in his book called God Tells the Man Who Cares, a chapter called The World Battleground or Playground, and I'll read you this. Segment, and we'll close with this in the early days, men conceived the world to be a battleground, our fathers believed in sin and the devil and hell is constituting one force, and they believe in God and righteousness in heaven is the other. These were opposed to each other in the nature of them forever in deep grave, irreconcilable hostility.

Man, so far as our fathers held had to choose sides. He could not be neutral for him. It must be life or death, heaven or hell.

And if he chose to come out on God's side, he could expect open war with God's enemies. The fight would be real and deadly and would last as long as life continued here below. Men look forward to heaven as a return from the wars, a laying down of the sword to enjoy in peace the home prepared for them.

Sermons and songs in those days often had a martial quality about them or perhaps a trade of homesickness. The Christian soldier thought of home and rest and reunion, and his voice grew plaintive as he sang of battle ended in victory one. But whether he was charging into enemy guns or dreaming of war's end and the father's welcome home, he never forgot what kind of world he lived in.

It was a battleground and many were the wounded in the slain. If we forget that we're in a battle. It'll be to our own hurt that we do that.

God, help us to see this and to take those weapons mighty in God that he's given us. That we might have victory, let's pray, Lord. We thank you that you haven't left us in the dark about this.

Aspect of our experience as Christians, but you've given us. Plenty of instruction. Help us, Lord.

Help us, Lord, to understand we're in a battle. Help us to understand the strategy of our adversary. And help us, Lord, to take those weapons that you've given us, those weapons mighty in God.

Help us, Lord, to wield them by the power of your spirit to victory, we pray in Jesus name. Amen. Let's stand together.

Perhaps you have been getting beaten up by the enemy and you need some prayer, some folks are up front here tonight and they'd love to pray with you, so avail yourself of that opportunity, avail yourself of that mighty weapon of prayer, pray for one another, stand on God's word and just live in an attitude of worship. And you'll walk in victory. God bless you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11708.mp3>
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