

Romans 12:18

by Doc Greenway

Doc Greenway's sermon on Romans 12:18 emphasizes the importance of living peaceably, the testing of faith, and responding to conflict with love and wisdom.

Duration: 43:13

Scripture: James 1:3

Topics: "Romans"

Description

In this sermon, Minister D.P. Williams shares a powerful story of how he prayed for a man's soul to be changed and God answered his prayer after three years. He emphasizes the importance of giving God time to work in people's lives and not seeking vengeance ourselves. Williams encourages believers to show charity and meet the needs of others, as this reflects God's mercy and grace. He also reminds listeners that it is God, not humans, who is the moral governor of the universe and will ultimately bring justice. The sermon emphasizes the testing of faith and the importance of faith being tested to have a testimony.

Transcript

...18 of this twelfth chapter of Romans, because we concluded verse 17 last Sunday evening, so I suppose this is pretty logical, isn't it? If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Now, as I mentioned last Sunday evening, from verse 14 to the end of this chapter, what you have really is the resilience of faith, the response of faith to the conflicts of life, the circumstances of life, the challenges of life, and even to men in the world and the sort of pressures that they impose upon you. How faith has an answer to these things, and we looked at some of these answers on the last occasion when we were considering the teachings of this chapter.

In fact, there were five that we mentioned at that time. I'm not going to go over them tonight, because there isn't time. But rather to commence with this verse that I've mentioned, verse 18, and to see that in all these relationships that I mention here, and in all these situations which are brought to the forefront, the paramount thing is not the quality of our faith merely, but the testing of our faith, which creates the testimony of our faith.

For I repeat what I said last Sunday evening, if faith is not tested, faith has no testimony. If faith has no conflict, faith has no conquest. And therefore, in the sight of God, it is not our faith that is a precious commodity, but the testing of our faith that is precious, so Peter tells us.

Therefore, if your faith is being tested as a Christian, because you have accepted Christ as your personal Savior, you may have thought at the time, well, now it's going to be glory all the way, and it's going to be a wonderful sort of life, and all my tests and all my challenges are over and done with. And then suddenly you wake up to find that the devil knows the number on your door, and there he is knocking away, and you're in strife. No, no, it's not quite like that.

But there is this, that when faith can find the answer, then faith has a testimony that it can share. And this is what strengthens the faith of your brother and sister, and indeed all with whom you're in contact. Don't give people your doubts, if they have doubts enough of their own, give them your faith, and share your faith with them.

Accentuate the positive. There's no time for the negative in Christian life. And if you insist on pursuing negative objectives, then you'll end up wasting your substance at wayside altars, and that's a dreadfully frustrating thing.

But accentuate the positive, share what you know from the standpoint of faith, and this can only come to you in the school of experience, and that's a very hard school, but it teaches some beautiful lessons. It's the school of hard knocks, and all it's books are bumps, and as you learn the lesson of one bump, well, then you go on to the next bump, and that's how you sort of make progress. And until you do learn the lesson of that bump, well, you get bumped with it until you find out what it's all about.

This is how Christian life is. All right, what is the apostle really saying here? He's telling us, first of all, that the answer of faith to the question of harmony is right here, if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Now notice how careful he is, if it be possible.

This is one of the qualifying contingencies that he mentions, if it be possible, because there may be occasions when, however much you want to live peaceably, you aren't allowed to, simply because you cannot have the absolute mastery and complete control over the conduct of other people. And therefore there comes a time, and you will discover it, when you have to put courtesy to one side for the sake of conviction. And as you do that, then you're involved in conflict and criticism.

But listen to me. No man amounted to anything yet for God who was afraid to come within scorching distance of the fires of criticism. If you're a Christian and you're going to be consistent, then you will soon discover that you must take a stand.

If you're going to compromise, then you'll discover that that compromise that you make is simply the refuge of the cowardly, and it's no security for the Christian. The way of compromise is never the way of victory. There is no right way of doing a wrong thing.

And so the time does come, occasionally, when face to face with the conflict and the challenge, you'll find that you cannot say peace at any price. But you have to take a stand on issues, a stand on principles. And the result is that you can't live as peaceably as you would like to in those circumstances.

It isn't your fault. It's the fault of the opposition. So don't start blaming yourself, becoming all concerned and all filled with remorse because of your weaknesses.

Remorse is good for nothing at all except to wallow in. It doesn't accomplish a single thing. So don't get into that attitude and frame of mind.

But see the thing for what it's worth. As much as lieth in you, as far as you possibly can do so, live at peace with all men. You see, it's easy enough to do this if there's no contention to face, isn't it? If you're living in an atmosphere, in an environment where it is not contentious at all, it's easy enough to live at peace.

You can live peaceably enough if there's no contradiction that you have to endure. And if there is no aggravation at all that you have to suffer, it's easy enough to live at peace then, isn't it? But remember, peace at any price is not the answer. Now bearing in mind these qualifying factors that I've mentioned here and which the Apostle stresses and underlines, faith does have the answer to the question of harmony.

And in a threefold way, this sort of harmony that the Apostle is talking about is an expression of forbearance. He says this in Colossians 3 and verse 13, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man hath a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. An expression of forbearance, forgiving one another, forbearing with one another.

Bearing up under all the things that would cause you to become irritable and irritated. And this, of course, is not always an easy thing to do, is it? I heard some time ago about a man who had bought a property, and the very first day that he got onto this property and into the house with his wife and family, next-door neighbors pulled him over the fence and said, you bought this property? Yes. You bought yourself a lawsuit? Oh, he said, how come? He said, you're dividing fences two feet on my property.

Is it indeed, he said? Well, now, we'll have to do something about that. Now, he said, this is what I suggest. Give me your hand, he said, we'll take the fence down and put it four feet onto my property.

What do you want to do that for, he said? Well, he said, because I'm a Christian and I want to live at peace. And he said, I'm prepared to do that. And I'm sure it is well worth it.

But this idea of forbearance is something which is intensely personal and about which we have to come to a decision ourselves. No one can set standards for somebody else when it comes to the amount of forbearance that you have and the amount that you can endure before you, you know, before you blow up. Live peaceably, as much as lies within you, live peaceably with all men.

And then this harmony is an expression of wisdom and divine wisdom. James tells us that in 3.17 and 18. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and without hypocrisy.

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. Isn't this lovely? So you see, this harmony about which Paul is speaking here is an expression of the wisdom which comes down from God. Jesus said about this, didn't he, blessed are the peacemakers.

This word blessed is spiritually prosperous are those that try to make peace. Spiritually prosperous. And I've met these people, I'm sure you have too, and you can bear out what the Scripture says.

They are prospering spiritually because they have this approach to life. I can recall years ago in Sunderland, I was conducting some Bible teaching services, and in the course of one evening service I mentioned something which I didn't think was controversial at all. I thought it was pretty plain and simple and straightforward and easy to be understood.

But I can remember a little fellow with a very big voice, in fact I think his voice was the biggest thing about him. He just stood up right in the middle of what I was saying and contradicted it, you know. And he kept on saying, I want knowledge, I want knowledge, I want knowledge.

And when I got an opportunity of getting a word in I said, my brother, you may want knowledge but oh, you need wisdom. And at the end of the service I had an opportunity of talking with him. But that's exactly what he did, didn't he.

Because what he was after was quite controversial and stirring up things a lot, you know, and that's no atmosphere for teaching. However, this expression of harmony is an expression of wisdom, and we are taught this quite clearly. And then this harmony about which the Apostle speaks is an expression of endeavor.

In Romans 14 and verse 9 you have this, Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Follow after, dioku. It means to run swiftly so as to overtake, to lay a hold upon, to seek after something with great eagerness and great enthusiasm.

This is the approach, says the Apostle, that will have the blessing of God. What are you to run after? The things which make for peace. The word here is teis arenas, and it means of peace.

The things of which peace are part and parcel, that you may edify one another. The word edify is oikedomio. It means to build up as a house is built up.

And so to promote spiritual growth in the lives of others. Writer to the Hebrews has the same idea when he says, Follow peace with all men. And Paul again emphasizes it in Ephesians when he says, Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

It's a thing you have to work at. And some of us, if we were to confess it tonight in testimony, would have to say quite clearly, it's very difficult at times working at this sort of thing. Keeping the peace, making the peace, pursuing the peace, preserving the peace, not easy.

Sometimes it's far easier to let things just slide. But this is the kind of Christian life into which we have been called. And therefore you see, it's something which challenges us in the realm of our faith.

It is the answer of our faith to this question of harmony. I can recall an evangelist noticing in the first two night services that he held a certain man sitting, and he seemed to be wrapped, you know, in what was going on. Then he missed him for about six nights, and then he turned up again, and at the end of this particular service he came to see the evangelist, and he said, I suppose you may have missed me.

Yes, I have, he said. He wondered what was happening. Well, he said, A long time ago I gave my heart to the Lord, and something happened between another brother and myself.

I did him an injury. And he said, I thought I could get over it by confessing it to God. But he said, On the second night that I came here, you said that unconfessed sin on the part of a Christian in the area where the fault has been committed is unforgiven.

And if it is unforgiven, it's uncleansed. And he said, That got to me. So he said, I didn't feel I should write to this brother, but he said, I took a long journey from coast to coast to meet up with him.

And he said, It took me a few days to get the thing straightened out. But it's straightened out now, he said, and for the first time in all these years I've got the deep, settled, sweet, abiding peace of God in my heart and in my mind. Something you have to work at.

And I would say to you tonight very definitely and very positively that if you are conscious of things in your life, or things that perhaps are in the lives of other people because of your own fault, or your own weakness, or your own sin that you've committed, or some grievance that you may be bearing concerning these people, something which disturbs, I do implore you, if you want to see this church going on in the ways of God, in the life of God, if you want to see blessing outward, if you want to see revival, then don't allow this thing to fester. Time heals all things. Yes, but time never heals sin.

It only causes it to fester all the more. And you will never find liberty and victory and blessing in your life until you put that wrong thing right to the best of your ability. Because this is the answer of faith to the question of harmony.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. And sometimes in order to do this, it's going to cost you a great deal, but it will never cost you more than God will enable you to pay. Don't tell me tonight, as a servant of God, I can't afford to do this.

You can't afford not to do it, if you want to go on with God. And I'm not speaking like this because I know this is my last night here for a little while. Not at all.

I say what I say because I'm not here to preach sermons. I'm here to give God's message. And if I'm not giving God's message, I don't want to be here at all, or anywhere else for that matter.

And didn't Jesus say it very clearly? He shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. And then comes the answer of faith to the question of equity. Verse 19.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. The word avenge is *ekdikio*.

Ek is a preposition, it means away from. *Ekdikio*, take your counsel and *dikaio*sune, righteousness, justification. Now what the apostle is saying is this.

Don't try to vindicate yourself. Don't take the vindication into your own hands, and make it appear that you know that you are right, and therefore you're going to stand for your rights, and you're going to have your rights, whatever the cost may be. Please remember, if you had your rights, you'd be in hell.

It's only by the grace of God that we are where we are, in the kingdom of God. Avenge not yourselves. The word *wrath*, *teorge*, is God's *wrath*.

You must not take this out of God's hands, says the apostle. Leave room for God to work. That's the picture behind it.

Not taking things into your own hands and seeing that the thing is done because you feel it ought to be done, but leaving room for God to work. Let me give you a literal translation of this. Never seek after revenge for wrongs committed against you, my much-loved ones.

Leave the field clear for God's *wrath*. It stands written, *vengeance is my sole prerogative*. I will make recompense, saith the Lord.

And that, you know, is Deuteronomy 32, 35. Under the law, personal revenge was forbidden. Leviticus 19, 18 teaches it.

Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of my people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. You say, yes, but that's under the law. Well, if it is like that, under the law, ought it not to be more so under grace? Like people talking about tithes, you know, they say, yes, but tithe, that's under the law.

They give a tenth under the law. Well, my answer is, if they give a tenth under the law, they ought to give much more under grace, not much less. That's logical, isn't it? And so it is here.

Personal revenge was forbidden. The Christian's responsibility, then, is to hand over vengeance to the Lord and leave it there. The wise man, Proverbs 20, 22, says, Say not thou, I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

He'll do something in you if you're prepared to wait on him. Give God time. That's all.

Give God time. I've had to learn that lesson, and I'm sure there are many here who are learning it at the present time, giving God time to do his own work in his own way. I remember when Ruth and I were married, because I'm so much older than she is, although I haven't had very many birthdays, and it takes me four years to get a birthday, really.

Which is all right, by the way. But there were some people who didn't like it at all and felt it was out of the will of God. And you know how people are.

They always know what's best for you, but they're not quite sure about what the will of God is concerning themselves. However, there were some terribly hard and cruel and bitter things said, and I can remember at that time feeling it very deeply. I don't know whether I ever mentioned this to you, but I was sitting at my desk one day and feeling very sorry for myself about something I'd just heard.

The Lord said to me, it's clearly as if I'd heard someone speak audibly. They haven't spit in your face yet, have they? I said, no, Lord, they haven't. Well, they spat in mine, he said.

And I asked the Lord to forgive me with tears, I tell you. And from that moment I handed the whole thing over to the Lord, and though it took years in some instances, every one of those people would come at different times to ask forgiveness. And you know, the most delightful thing? I was able to say, I forgive you freely, because I knew there wasn't the slightest trace of bitterness in my heart at all, to God be the glory.

And there wasn't the slightest desire to take vengeance at all, because God had taken it all away. And as I gave God time, he worked it out. And he'll do it for you.

Give God time. You know, when you do get so upset about these things, and you feel, my word, I'd like to give them a piece of my mind, you know the feeling you get? When you think like that, well, do as I do. Say it out loud if you have to.

Well, praise the Lord, a hundred years from now it won't matter. It's got a sort of different complexion on things. The Christian's responsibility is to hand the question of vengeance over to the Lord, because it is God, and not man, who is the moral governor of the universe.

Remember that. Not you, but he. I know in the little village where I was born, there was a minister there, a very dear servant of God, and he had a member in his congregation, a woman, very similar to the circumstances I spoke about the other night, her husband, was a terrible man.

Awful. You wonder why God allowed him to breathe. But you know, that man, he was so terrible that the minister himself felt that he wanted to get down to that man's house and just, you know, lay it on the line once and for all.

And it so happened that he was conducting a funeral, the minister was conducting a funeral, and this man was one of the people who stood there on the grave, some friend of his, evidently. And as this minister, his name was Williams, D.P. Williams, as he saw this man there, he prayed, as he was conducting the service, he prayed in his heart to God, and he said, God, fasten my soul to the soul of that man until he comes to you. And you know, God did just that.

It took three years. It took three years. But God so worked conviction in the heart and life of that man that he changed him completely.

And instead of thinking in terms of vengeance and the wrath of God falling upon him, he found the mercy of God. Give God time. Vengeance is mine.

I will repay, saith the Lord, and he will repay in his own way, for he is still the God of mercy and the God of grace. And then there is the answer of faith to the question of charity, in verse 20. Therefore, in the light of all this, in the light of what he has been saying, if an enemy hunger, feed him.

If he thirsts, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heat coals of fire on his head. If he is hungry, don't send him away hungry, but give him food. If he is thirsting, well, don't allow him to remain in that condition, do something about it, for this is the answer of faith to the question of charity.

By so doing, thou shalt heat coals of fire on his head. Now, what does this mean? Well, it's a very strange sort of thing to the Western way of thinking, isn't it? Somebody may say, well, that's one I haven't tried yet. It might work.

But they may be thinking in terms altogether different from what the scripture itself portrays. For you see, to keep the fire burning was a very important thing in the houses in Palestine. And if a woman found that her fire had gone out, it was difficult to get it going again.

So what would she do? She would put a cloth on her head first of all, and then a brazen tray, a brass tray, and she would go to her neighbor, and her neighbor would take out with the tongs one or two live coals and put it on the tray on her head. And she would go to neighbor after neighbor. And if they wanted to be especially generous and gracious, well, they would heat the coals of the fire.

And in this way, the woman, when she got home, would have a nice blazing fire to set down in the heart. And this is the thought here. If an enemy hunger, well, feed him.

If he thirsts, give him to drink. If you do this, you're going to heat coals of fire on his head. You're going to let him see that you really mean business because you're a Christian.

You're going to do something for his benefit, however much he may have worked against you, and however strong may be his opposition to you. And in the end, it is love that always wins through, isn't it?

Why are we here tonight? I don't think that if I were to ask you to put up your hand that very many of you would have to say you are here because the wrath of God drove you to him, or you are here because the fear of God impelled you to come to him. No, it is the revelation of the love of God that somehow has drawn you to him.

And that revelation on Calvary is so strong and so vibrant that during the passing of the centuries, it still is love that's burning its fiercest and giving its dearest and shining its clearest. Love giving and giving and giving. When God loves, he loves a world.

When God gives, he gives his son. This is the kind of thing that wins things for people. And I think, too, that you'll agree that this is the evidence of compassion.

And we are exalted to this, you remember, in Proverbs 24, 17. Rejoice not when thine enemy faileth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbles. Don't be glad when your enemy fails or when you see something happening to him.

I've heard people say this sort of thing, and it's terribly hard and difficult to take. Oh, so-and-so isn't in the will of God. Look at the way that he's suffering.

Or so-and-so has stepped out of God's purpose because of the calamity that's come upon his life. How dreadful, how terrible. A person that talks in that way has got his feet in the Old Testament and his head in the New Testament.

He's under law still. Because this is the way that the Hebrew used to argue. If a person prospered, he was under the blessing of God.

Prospered materially. If he didn't prosper materially, well, then, like Job, of course, he must have sinned against God and so on. But this is not the reasoning of the Christian.

Here's the evidence of compassion that must come into play. I know of an apprentice covenant maker who, when he had served his time, did a very, well, I think a very mean thing. He had been planning for weeks, unknown to the man who taught him his trade, to open a shop in the same street where his master was.

And he did that very thing. And you know, in a couple of months, his shop burned down, burned to the ground. And one of the first people who came to see him was the man that trained him.

And this young fellow looked up and he said, oh, I suppose you've come to gloat. No, he said, I've come to help. I've come to help.

What can I do to help you? And isn't this the Christianity? Surely it is. It's what the Bible commands. The obedience of submission is in this.

Matthew 5 and 44. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. How can you do this unless you are a Christian? How can you do this except the love of God is in your heart and flowing through your life? How is it possible? Have you ever read the stories of Sarasandha Singh? Have you read how once they stripped away his clothing because they were so mad against him? And they fastened blood-sucking leeches to his body and tied him to a crucifix and left him all night, knowing in the morning he would be

dead? I've read the story, read the record, how he began to pray for his enemies and asked God to bless those who were spitefully using him.

And although the leeches were sucking away his life's blood, one by one they fell off. And whereas he should have died, in the morning they found him praising God for all he was worth and rejoicing in the Lord. Why? Because all night long he had been praying for these men.

God blessed them, God saved them, God meet them in some way. It's the language of Scripture, but it's also the language of Jesus. Don't forget that.

And I believe, too, that it involves the acceptance of self-crucifixion. And perhaps this is the hardest one of all. What is the answer of faith to the question of charity? Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him.

If he thirst, give him drink. How can you do this? Galatians 2.20 is the answer, isn't it? I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. No man can ever live as the Bible expects him to live until he first of all signs his own death warrant and dies with Christ. When he has signed his death warrant, when he has taken his place with Jesus on that cross, then and then only can he hope to fulfill the injunctions of Scripture that are here.

Then and then only can he hope to live as a consistent, victorious Christian. Only then. His hands are fastened, he can't do what he used to do.

His feet are nailed if he's crucified with Christ. He can't go where once he went, and he can't go at his own bidding. His head is crowned with thorns, his intellect is crucified.

Thus they smote Jesus in the mouth, because he would not prophesy, and he held his peace unlike a sheep before her shearers his dung. So he opened not his mouth, so he too must learn this lesson. You cannot kill death.

You cannot conquer conquest, and that's why Calvary is always victorious. My brother Des and I had an argument, just supposing, only supposing, Des. Well, you know, there's a chance that he might overcome me if it came to a showdown.

Every chance in the world. But if we came together, and he had an argument against me, and I had no argument with him at all, and he is laying it down as hard as ever he can and letting me know, you know, where I stand and so on, and there's no fight in me. He can't conquer me.

You can't conquer conquest. You can't defeat defeat. You can't kill death.

That's why they didn't know what to do with Jesus. And that's why he is such a tremendous conqueror, because he gave himself. He gave his hands and feet to the nail.

He gave his side to the spear. He gave his cheeks to those that plucked out the hair thereof. He gave his lips to those that smote him.

He gave his head to the crown of thorns. He gave his back to the smiters. He gave his mother to his disciples.

He gave his disciple to his mother. And when he had given everything else, he gave himself. That's why he is the mighty conqueror.

And don't you see that this is the expression, the answer of faith, the question of charity towards those despiteful users. The ultimate answer is Galatians 2.20, the signing of our own death warrant and our dying with Christ. One thing more, the answer of faith to the question of victory, verse 21.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. This is the present passive imperative, present tense, passive voice, imperative move. And what he is saying is this.

Stop being conquered by the evil thing. But keep on conquering the evil by continued goodness. This raises the problem of temptation, doesn't it? And how to deal with it.

For this is the evil that is mentioned. And the evil that surrounds us and swirls around us all the time. What can you do with temptation? Oh, many things.

You can heal it. That's the simplest thing of all. You can play with it.

You can trifle with it. You can ignore it. You can evade it.

You can attempt to avoid it. You can excuse it. You can compromise with it.

But the only thing that really matters, if you're a Christian, is how you overcome it. And you overcome temptation only as you lean back hard upon the provisions that God has made. Three things, briefly.

Minimize your personal tendency. By not enticing sin. By not being careless about that sin which doth so easily beset you.

Or that sin that so casually tangles you up. Minimize your personal tendency. See the evil for what it is.

And call it by its proper name. This is what is happening in the world around us. They talk today about the new morality which is neither new nor moral.

People have an affair. No, they don't. They commit adultery.

People are experimenting with sex as young people. They are not. They are guilty of fornication.

And all these euphemistic terms that are employed to cover over with a veil the stinking mess as God sees it. This is what we've got to realize and understand. When young people come to me and I can see that they're in trouble and in some sort of bother, I say to them, look here, I'm unshockable and unflappable, so shoot.

And I don't want any covering up or anything like that at all. But a plain, straightforward declaration of the thing as it is. The saints of God, we've got to come to this place.

We've got to reach this point where we are perfectly honest about these things. A minister friend of mine was approached by some of his deacons in Adelaide in South Australia years ago because they were concerned. He was talking about sin and they were afraid it would drive the young people away.

They were in his study when they were talking. He reached up to a high shelf and took down a bottle and put it on the bench on his desk and he said, now what's on that bottle? Oh, they said, it's marked poison.

Well, what else is there? Strychnine.

Oh, so it's poison, yes. Now, what I propose to do, gentlemen, he said, is from next Sunday, I'm going to change the label on this bottle and call it peppermint drops. I think they got the point.

You don't change the substance of a thing by changing the label. And so we must never minimize our personal tendency to these evil things by quoting them over, by making excuses, by anything at all, but by facing the thing for what it's worth. And then recognize your soul's adversary.

You're not wrestling against flesh and blood. You aren't wrestling against people. People are being merely used by the devil.

It's the devil himself who is your soul's adversary. And we have to realize and understand this. Ephesians 6, 12, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

That's where our battle lies. So recognize your soul's adversary. And the final thing, utilize your spiritual armory.

Put on the whole armor of God. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand, to withstand. And you think, well, praise God, that battle's over and done with.

But don't forget, you've got to stand because the devil won't leave you alone. He's coming back at you again from some other angle. So put on the whole armor of God, and it's the piece by piece armor of God.

And only you can do this. God won't do it for you. You have to do it for yourself.

And God knows your size. And there are never any misfits where God's concerned. He doesn't send David out with Saul's armor, but he sends David out equipped to best he knows.

And it'll be the same where we are concerned. Take the way of the flesh, you cannot win. Take the way of the spirit, you cannot lose.

It's as simple as that. Let's pray. Eternal Father, mighty and strong to deliver, we are conscious again this night of thy presence in this place, conscious indeed of our own weaknesses, our own failings, our own inconsistencies.

In the times of that number that we have not been able to reach the standard that thou have set for us, because we've been trying to do it in our own strength. But O God, we thank thee that there is an answer which faith has to the problems of life, to the situations in which we find ourselves, and even to people, their actions and reactions. We don't have the answer in ourselves, O Lord, because it is not in us.

But we praise thee because the answer is in the faith that thou hast placed in our hearts. And if we are prepared to walk by faith and not by sight, thou wilt enable us to live victoriously in a world that is being ruled by the powers of darkness. We thank thee and praise thee because we belong to the realm of light, and we pray that thou wilt help us to walk and live and serve as children of light, that our testimony in this place and wherever thou hast set us may be of such a character that no one will be caused to stumble because of our inconsistencies and because of our determination to compromise when it would involve us in conflict to stand for God.

O God, help us to be sold out to thee, spirit, soul, and body. Amen.

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