

Spiritual Soldier

by Dean Taylor

This sermon emphasizes the journey of the spiritual soldier, highlighting the importance of staying separated unto God, maintaining a pure heart, and being invincible against spiritual attacks. It warns against the slow seduction and the dangers of fraternizing with the enemy, urging believers to remain vigilant and faithful in their walk with God.

Scripture: Numbers 23:21, Psalms 24:3, 2 Peter 2:15, Revelation 2:14, Psalms 13:3

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Vigilance in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Do the road so it always feels so good. And so it's a blessing. Please feel free to come by and say hi to us and we'll be seeing you throughout the whole week.

And so today I'm gonna be looking at, no, I'm supposed to tell a little bit more about myself. So we have six children. I think most, a lot of y'all know several of them.

I have three grandchildren and yes, we have four generations living in my house now. We have, we went and got Tanya's mother. So she's living with us now, she's 84.

And down my oldest son with his wife and three kids are living in my basement. And so then we have one more on the way as well. I'm another one.

So it's been a, it's been a, it's a very full home. It's a very blessed home. And you know, you're entering a different phase of life with all that and it's a blessing.

Tanya and I were soldiers in the army some 30 something years ago. And became conscientious objectors. And it's from that that we, looking at the teachings of Jesus, we became involved in the Anabaptist circles and has been there ever since.

And so it's been a, it's been a pleasure to be here. So maybe we should try to fix that. I can, I have a little thing too.

I can try mine. So there's always some technical thing. Okay.

Okay, mine looks a lot like yours. I'm not sure. So I do anesthesia as my job.

And so I've been doing that in Holmes County again. I haven't done it for a while. I had to get back into that.

And so that's been good. So I always like to say I'm the preacher that put people to sleep. So we'll see.

We'll see how that goes tonight. All right. Try this.

Does that seem better? Oh, thank you. Yes. Thank you very much.

No, much worse. I could do this without slides. It is possible.

I do have. Is that worse? Thank you. Technology is a mixed blessing.

I saw a presentation once and it, this is back when we first started using PowerPoint. And the presentation was, what if the Gettysburg address was a PowerPoint? And then it was going through all the different types of things and how it just destroys the whole message by having all these points and everything. And of course, all the technical problems part of it.

All right. So let's see if that's better. I can at least hit this button.

All right. So let's do that. So if we could, let's gather our hearts and look to the Lord for what he has for us in this Bible school.

And I'll say this about Bible school. And I, it is a time that we spend, try to do inventory. You know, you bring in a guest speaker, you take some time out of your schedule, and there's always something that God is trying to speak to us during these times.

And so I, we don't know what that is, but just make God give all of us, me included, his grace and his spirit during this time that we're taking out to hear from him and see what he wants to tell us. Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, I thank you so much for this time and for being the great privilege it is to being here at Weavertown.

And Lord, I just pray your anointing, your presence, and I pray that you would be here. And so God, I ask you to be over the reading of your word and that you would give me inspiration and allow me to say what you want to be said. And Lord, it's in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. All right, so the theme verse that I'm gonna use throughout the whole week is that found in 2 Timothy 2.4. And it is no one engaged in warfare and tangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And so that's the idea of the spiritual soldier is the theme that was given to me and that we're gonna be keep going on this.

And you know, as I ponder this, I haven't done a Bible school in a while, so I'm a little rusty. And you know, every phase of life I have noticed that I've gone through is you're a different person. I'm a different man.

And in the different experiences we have, it can do one or two things to you or it can do many things to you, but it can make people be cynical. It can make people give up. And through the years, I have seen tragically many people lose the faith.

I've seen people get messed up with different heresies, with different factions and schisms, and from that become discouraged and they lose the faith. And doing that, when you see people, you know, as a soldier sees his buddy get shot or you see people injured and die on the battlefield, it does something to you. I mean, it could ruin a soldier's momentum.

But I think that even worse than that, soldiers are sort of used to that. I mean, you're not used to it, but you know that could happen. When you look at what causes oftentimes people to give up, to get frustrated, to completely surrender, is when they're demoralized at a bigger level.

You know, it's when the, seeing your buddies get shot, that's one thing, but seeing factious governments or a platoon that gets involved in something where an officer had defected or gone awry some way. When we hear of people who came back from Vietnam and they were very demoralized by the lack of support from the country who sent them there for all this. And those kind of things that are system, that are bigger, that are deeper, demoralize people, I think, in a big way.

And it's those themes, the propaganda, the media, those types of things that attack the physical soldier. And I think it's the same for us. You know, propaganda and espionage and those types of things was always part of winning battles, was since the Roman Empire.

You can look at how espionage and propaganda was used even in the Roman Empire during the times of Christ. And I think even more so, it is where we have today. And I think that we do have many risks and many things that are attacking and coming upon the church in ways that we have never seen.

I can think that even my first born son, when he was born, the internet did not even exist. Didn't even exist. Someone would have said, what's the internet? You would have not even known when my first born son was born.

Now it's hard to even imagine a life without that. The idea of cell phones and all those types of things have become so common. And I think that where we usually would have had a sense of community and a way to pass on the faith and these types of things, now it is much more difficult.

There's much more things that are hard in this. But I do believe that we should have hope. And hope, and I do have hope.

And as I look at some of these things, I have hope for several reasons. You know, and hope is very interesting. I remember when I was studying some of the Greek mythology and hope is even built into the human.

In Greek mythology, you know the story of Pandora's box? You've heard this? Actually, it's the Greek creation world for the woman. It's actually a terrible, so when the first woman was made is when she opened this box, Pandora opened this box and all these evil things came out. And that's their creation story, the pagans of Greece.

But after all these things start flying out and all these things, according to Greek mythology, the pagans said that there was one thing at the very bottom, hope. And it helps human beings go on and on. So

there's just something even that's human beyond Christian that humans feel like without hope, you just die.

But we have not even just that kind of pagan hope, not at all. I think that we have a living hope. And this is the passage that I love in Isaiah 59 that speaks of this.

And I think it speaks to the time period that we are living in. And it's a promise. And I think we're living in a time like what Isaiah is describing here, that we have a promise.

Isaiah 59, verse 19 through 20. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the West and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy comes in like a flood, and we have that, the enemy, when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

The redeemer will come to Zion and those who turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord. I think that's beautiful. I think that's really beautiful.

And so we have a new generation and I also am inspired. I, even though in the midst of all these trials and temptations, I hear a younger generation. I hear people who are getting it, who want to bring glory to God, who want to spread his kingdom.

And it inspires me, it encourages me and it helps me to keep going. And I want to bring us hope today that we have a living God who never fails. So I'm gonna look at these things and this is the week that we have.

On Sunday, we're gonna look at the spiritual soldier. I'm gonna go look through a passage of numbers. On Monday, I'm gonna look at the battle plans.

On Tuesday, we're gonna look at ways in which the espionage or the ways that the world and Satan has infiltrated the church and gets to us through politics, through media, those sort of things. On Wednesday, Wednesday, we're gonna talk about weapons of our warfare. We're gonna talk about prayer.

We're gonna talk about salvation and the helmet of salvation, those kind of things. And then Thursday, kingdom building, particularly from an Anabaptist perspective. And so let's now turn to the Bible.

And one of my favorite things, I tend to preach on a lot. I'm not gonna go through it entirely expository, but grab some little thoughts from it. It's one of my favorite passages in the Old Testament.

It's in Numbers chapter 21. And I'm gonna be taking through some of those passages. In Numbers chapter 21, we have this passage of where you have this period when Israel was, you know, when they first came, they crossed the Red Sea, then they got in trouble and they went through all this.

And now they're finally on this march. And you have this period between the raising of the serpent to the next plague, where they are really walking in faith and powerful. And we can learn a lot of lessons in this story.

Now, what we have here first, as you know, this is where we'll pick it up in Numbers 21, is that they were weary and began to complain. Look at verse four. Then they journeyed from Mount Thor by the way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom.

And the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And King James says, because of the way. I tell you, discouraging.

Discouragement is one of the things that kill us every time. Remember John the Baptist, he was in prison. He bled in his, left in his mother's womb when he, you know, when Jesus was even before, when they were both not even born yet.

And he had seen Jesus through all these things. He heard perhaps the sermon, I've come to set the captives free. But John the Baptist was setting in jail, getting discouraged.

And he sent his disciples to Jesus and saying, are you really Christ? And remember Jesus said, blessed is he who is not offended in me. Discouraging, when we get discouraged, we can tend to lose faith. We must look at these examples and not.

And five, it says, and the people spoke against God and against Moses. Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there's no food and no water. And our souls loathes the worthless bread, this worthless bread, manna.

So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people and many of the people of Israel died. And so we know then what happens is that the God after that happens, the punishment happens, and then he gives this cure. And this cure is incredible because it goes all the way into the New Testament of Jesus.

And there's something about that idea that just by looking up in faith, they were healed. You had to crawl out of your tent. You had to look up.

You had to have the cure of how it was given. But when they did this, they were cured. And when this happens, we enter in a little window here where you have a completely redeemed people, saved, walking with God on the battlefield.

And it is amazing. And I look at a lot of different stories. I mean, a lot of different, I take a lot of interesting lessons from these passages that follow here.

So what happens then, they're on the battlefield and they start to go and you mentioned them as it says like in the next chapter, and Israel took all of these cities and they took these cities. And you see just a people walking victoriously, clear conscience, walking with God. And it's getting so bad that the King Balak is like, this is a problem.

They're obviously gonna come into my country and they're going to kill me too. So Balak goes to Balaam and the famous story of where he tries to get them to seduce them and to curse the people of God. It's an amazing thing because I don't, if you think about it, I'm trying to think, maybe y'all can help me.

I'm trying to think of another, you don't get too many times where you get a spectator's view of the people of God. It's always kind of a dialogue or back and forth of the people of God, but this is one of the rare times, I'm sure there's others, but it's one of the rare times where you're getting a spectator's view of the people of God. And that's what we get out of these stories.

And so as you remember the story, you got the children, you remember the donkey, the talking donkey story and all that, then finally you get up to the mountain where Balak is saying, he's taking this Balaam, he said, I want you to go out and I want you to curse the people of God. And so he gives it a try, brings all these sacrifices and all these things like you see that picture there and tries to do these things. But then, please listen to how, to why these curses did not work.

Numbers 23, eight, so he says, how shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how shall I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced? For from the tops of the rock I see him and from the hills I behold him and there are people dwelling alone and not reckoning itself among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob or number one fourth of the Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous and let my end be like this. When I think of our verse that we're basing this whole week on, no one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

And you think of this idea that they're there and they're not messing with the world. It says here that they were separated. They're not like the world.

The word that says they're from the top of the rocks, I see him, a people dwelling alone or people dwelling separated, not reckoning itself among the nations. And so when I get this and I ponder this element of a redeemed people of God on the move, I wanna pause for a moment and ask you this question. Does this describe you? This idea? They're not involved with the politics or not involved with the entertainment, the different tribes that are around there, the pagans that are there, but they are on the move.

They have a purpose and they're going forth as a people of God. And then he even says, I want a life like that. Let me die the death of the righteous.

And there's something about seeing just people with a purpose like that that inspires it. I ran across this. I was trying to think of an example that brings this up.

Have you ever heard that report of a young communist during the 1950s who wrote in a magazine, boasting and challenging the Americans or the capitalists in America, the regular people in America, that you will never defeat us because of our zeal and our passion and our drive for the cause. I'm gonna read to you his letter. Came out in 1958, 1957 in a magazine in America.

He said this and he wrote, and I want you to imagine, I want you to think of how zealous this young communist was about his cause. He says this, he says, what seems of first importance to you is to me either not desirable or impossible of realization. But there's one thing about which I am dead earnest and that is the communist cause.

It is my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife and mistress, my bread and meat. I work at it in the daytime and dream of it at night. It holds on me, grows, not lessens as time goes on.

I'll be in it the rest of my life. When you think of me, it's necessary to think of communism as well because I am inseparably bound to it. Therefore, I can't carry on a friendship, a love affair or even a conversation without relation to the force which both drives and guides my life.

I evaluate people, I evaluate books, ideas, actions according to how they affect the communist cause and by their attitude towards it. I have already been in jail because of my ideas and if necessary, I'm ready to go before a firing squad. Now, what does this mean for us communists in a personal way? Well, it means this.

We are in the forefront of the working class in its titanic struggle with the capitalist class. We take the heaviest and most direct blows. We have a high casualty rate.

We're the ones who get stoned and hanged and lynched, tarred and feathered, jailed and slandered and ridiculed, fired from our jobs and in every way made as uncomfortable as possible. A certain percentage of us get killed and imprisoned. Even for those who escape these harsher ends of life, it's not a bed of roses.

A genuine communist lives in virtual poverty. He takes back the communist party every penny he makes above what is absolutely necessary to keep him alive. We constantly look for places where the class struggle is the sharpest and exploit the situation to the limits of its possibilities.

We have strikes, we organize demonstrations, we speak on street corners, we fight police, we go through trying experiences many times each year which the ordinary worker has to force only once or twice in a lifetime. And when we are not doing the more exciting things, all our spare time is taken up with the dual routine chores, the endless legworks, the errands which are inescapably connected with running a live organization. Communists don't have time or money for many movies or concerts or T-bone steaks or decent homes or new cars.

We have been described as fanatics, we are. Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor, the struggle for communism. And when you think of that kind of a zeal and you ask yourself, what is my passion for Jesus Christ and his cause? What is my passion for that? What is, do I have that same kind of a zeal? Do you understand that even a little bit? I ask you, I think of back hearing the call of a bugle or the sound of a bagpipe playing.

You know, a bugle on a cold morning is not usually a pretty sound when it's cold and certainly a bugle, they're usually out of tune. But there's something that even to this day I have to fight inside of me, not to feel the pull that come from these sounds. Do we have that when you hear the hymns of the faith? Yeah, I'm not saying you can listen to bugles or bagpipes every day, but do you even understand the kind of ownership, passion, separatedness to the hymns of the faith through the things of God in that way? I reject that old world of the military and all that it is and I love the hymns of the faith.

I love to hear about the redemption of Jesus Christ and his salvation for us, but do you understand that when we talk about those types of things? And let me tell you, in this kind of thing that he saw, and Balaam looked and he saw, a people not reckoned among the nations. They were separated, they were on a way, they had a passion in the way they were going. They were very singularly for God.

And you have to be careful in this, there's something I believe inside of us that God gave us to be patriots, but he's also very jealous over whatever that is inside of it, that it's for the King Jesus Christ and nothing other. And I'll tell you, there is oftentimes that we can give this passion, this part of us that is meant to be only for God and to have that kind of passionate zeal like we heard from the communists for God, we give it to other things. In Mark 8, 15, Jesus gave them a warning.

He said, then he charged them saying, take heed, brethren, the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Both these things, the whole Pharisees thing. We can even follow religious leaders, factions, schisms, little groups or different things that want to try to gather people away and to get them following, get a little following.

Even with religious things, people tend to act this way. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrite, for you travel land and sea to win one prostitute. And when he is won, you make him twice as much as the son of hell as yourselves.

You know, as I am a student of history, and as I have seen and I've looked, usually when you read all of these, if you read the actual writings of Hitler or these tyrants and all these types of ones, they see themselves as saviors, as people that are changing things and making things better. And I have found this to be true. The greatest atrocities that have befallen mankind in all of history have been done by men who think they do God a service.

So we have to be careful when then we have that zeal and that passion to follow God, we do it only for God and not to get distracted from different things. I found this to be true also. I think there are two ways for tyrants to rule the world.

As I look at history, I'm a student of history, and as I look at it, there's two ways for this to happen. And one of the things that I'm focusing here at this moment is to think of the ways that the church, the people of God get attacked and get discouraged. And in the midst of these tyrants that come against the church, I think there's two ways in history that tyrants have ruled the world.

The first is like that of Alexander the Great or Napoleon or Joseph Stalin, who through military power, coercion and tyranny, subdue their nations with such force and cruelty that their enemies tremble before they ever cross the borders. That's one way, but there's another way and be careful for this one. The second way is to create a world so small that you remove all the competition.

In this world, tyrants still rule. However, their force of their abuse is projected on maintaining the loyalty of their clan and the elevation of their axioms. In both cases, those who cross their path rarely do so without acquiescence or abhorrence.

What I mean by this is to say what I'm worried and concerned about are the things that I'm, now that we are inundated by so many voices, the internet can come and they can try to grab our children or this group and that group and this thing and the other thing and all these things want their own agenda and want their own world and want their own following. We must keep our eyes on the prize of Jesus Christ and on him and that is what they saw in there. We can be distracted, this thing inside of us that wants that type of group can grab us, our attention.

And God said, for you shall worship no other God for the Lord whose name is Jealous is a jealous God. All these different religious leaders and different things, they want a following, you must not. And I like one of the other verses actually said to yield his glory to others.

God will not do that. He goes on. And he says, so there he has in this whole idea as he looks on, as he goes on and ponders them, a people dwelling alone, not reckoning itself among the nations.

And he says this, he goes on to say this. Let me die the death of the righteous and let my end be like this. There is something very attractive.

There's something very contagious about having a purpose. You know, even like if you're setting in a, let's say you're on the turnpike and you're at somewhere and a group people come in, they all have the same little t-shirts on from some school or something and they're doing it. You can see they just have a purpose and they're going through it.

It's attractive. There's something about us that notice it. When the people of God are walking in concert together with a cause for the glory of God, there's something that just makes, that's contagious about that.

And that is, he ponders. So Balaam's looking at this and wanting to curse him. And he says, I want to die like that.

I want a life like these people have. My life is vain. My life is empty.

I want a life like this. And this is something that I think the spiritual soldier is needing. All right, he goes on.

He goes on and he tries them. And you know, he tries different times to give curses to him. And this next time he says, and he will not, he has said and he will not do it.

So he goes up, Balaam can say, please curse them, curse them. Balaam says he has said and he will not do. Or has he spoken and he will not make it good.

Behold, I have received a command to bless. He has blessed and I cannot reverse it. And then this passage, and I really ponder this.

He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen wickedness in Israel. Now, ponder this passage for a second. You remember the, you know the people, all the different things.

They were just getting cursed a minute ago and lots of people died by fiery serpents and all this. There was a complaining before that and all the things that happened. And yet at this moment in their journey, and I don't want you to miss this point.

It's incredibly important. That in this moment in their journey, when they came to Christ by faith, when they're following him and their hands are clean and their hearts are pure and they're walking in the faith, God is looking at them and when he's trying to curse them, I see no iniquity in Israel. I see no iniquity.

We want that blessing over our head. I'm asking you what you're here for this time in Bible school and we're taking time out to do some inventory, to ask yourself, where am I with God? Is this true of you that God is seeing you with this way? Remember they did mess up in their life. God wasn't finished with them.

Repent and come to him and he has this. He's trying to curse them and he can't, he can't. Psalm 24, three, who shall ascend to the heel of the Lord or who shall stand in his holy place? He that has a clean hand and a pure heart who has not lifted up his soul into vanity nor sworn deceitfully.

And then he says this, one of my favorite whole passages. And I want you to get this. The Lord God said to him, the Lord God is with him and the shout of a king is among him.

With this clean hands and this pure heart, he has Christ within him. There's something that is so pure. Now if you're here again and your conscience is defiled and there's something, God is giving us this conscience.

God has given us these times like this. Let me ask you these questions here. Which one of these are true? Acting against your conscience can be a sin or two.

Acting in accordance to your conscience can be a sin. Your conscience is given to you by God. Number four, your conscience is not the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Your conscience can be shaped by the word of God. Your conscience can be a powerful tool in your path of holiness. All these things are true.

Your conscience is not the Holy Spirit but God uses your conscience and he works with your conscience with the word of God, instructing your conscience and if you're here today or throughout this week and God pricks your conscience about things in your life that needs to get clean, by all means come to God. Come to Jesus Christ and have the clean hands and the pure heart so that these curses will have no effect on you. I love this passage here in 1 Timothy.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons, speaking lies and hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with hot iron. Another one in 2 Corinthians, but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He has observed no iniquity in Jacob nor has he seen wickedness in Israel.

Make sure that you leave this week with this sort of purity in your heart and get all the things right. And then the Lord God is with them and the shout of a king is among them. This idea that God is with them, the idea that our salvation is not just a doctrine or agreeing a creed or joining some sort of a political party or something.

Being a Christian is having Christ within us. As Paul says there, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I but Christ lives in me.

And when that happens and you're walking with faith, your hands are clean, your conscience is clear and you're a spiritual soldier on purpose walking forward, there's a battle cry. And he says the shout of a king is among him. I did a quick study, I was curious for the Bible study and I was curious what kind of war cries were out there? You know, the Romans had this baritas which they got from the Germans and then finally it was some sort of a growl that finally went into a scream of a hellish type of a scream.

It was terrible. Other groups like a terrible one during the crusade that the popes gave them this idea that deus hoc volt, that God is with us and with this whole idea or it is the will of God. As they went through this crusade and while they were killing and doing all the terrible things they were doing, they were screaming out these different battle cries.

The northern troops speak of the rebel yell and there's some eyewitness accounts of how terrible and awful the cry of these rebel during the confederate armies were. Another one was, I grew up in Texas, after the Texans lost the Alamo, the later Texan armies with Sam Houston all would use this as a battle cry. The Russians would literally have ones that just speak of land and bread and when they were taking Stalingrad and a little later they said, there is no land for us beyond the Volga and it was attached to a purpose or a particular thing that they were wanting.

Maybe even a little closer to ours would be during the World War II and before that was the Japanese soldiers with Bonsai. It literally means something like 10,000 years, like a millennium and they would say it with their emperor, the emperor for 10,000 years and then kamikaze into the different troops and of course, the hideous Gott mit uns from the Nazis was their battle cry. That all this wickedness, the God has his with purity and with purpose and there was something that he recognized as they were defeating all these different armies and their hands were pure and they were walking with faith and they were on the move, the shout of a king is among them.

Do you get that at all? I, I, I remember early on, I remember sitting in a church and we had the hymn reading, I love John D's hymnal so don't slam it but hey, here it is. This is it, no, this is a church hymnal. So I had the hymnal, I remember when I was first new to the faith and being in a church service where the singing was really powerful.

There's been a couple times in my life that I really remember it standing out. One time was actually a, what they had during the 90s, oh, Promise Keepers. There was all these, I was at a place with like 60,000 men and they were singing hymns and there was just something, not to, there was a lot of things that went odd in that whole movement but the one thing I do remember is singing hymns with 60,000 men was powerful.

But I remember once singing and when I first started being around, do you ever remember singing hymns and it's really good and your hymnal vibrates? You can feel it, you feel it in your heart, you feel it, I love that. And I love when the hymnal, when the singing gets so zealous that you can feel the vibrating of the hymnal. That's the shout of a king to me that replaced my bugle cries and calls and that type of thing and I love it.

Do you love the church? Do you love the people of God? Do you love the songs of the faith? These things, I encourage you that they are things that help us along the way in our journey of faith and they're powerful. They're very powerful. And he goes on.

And then he says this and he tries to curse them. Balak is again trying to get him to curse them. And God brings him out of Egypt, he says.

He has strength like a wild ox. And listen to this. For there is no sorcery against Jacob.

I can't touch them. It now must be said of Jacob as of Israel. Oh, what has God done? Look, a people raised like a lioness and lifts itself up like a lion.

It shall not lie down until it devours a prey and drinks the blood of the slain. For there is no sorcery against Jacob nor any divination against Israel. Are you having spiritual victory in your life? If you're having spiritual defeat in your life, I don't just mean just bad things happen to all saints, but you know what I mean.

A Christian can discern when this is a spiritual attack. And if you had allowed yourself to have a defiled conscience or you're walking without that pure, there seems to be not this kind of protection. But when they're walking with faith, separated unto God, walking with a clear purpose, with a clean hand and a pure heart, he's saying there's no sorcery that can touch them.

That's powerful stuff, isn't it? You want this kind of blessing over you and over your home. Oh, what has God done? So they were invincible. Absolutely, it seems, invincible.

Invincible, forgiven, pure in the eyes of God, faithful, practicing the will of God, holy, sanctified, separated unto God, victorious, experiencing victory, and untouchable to the attacks of Satan. That's the place we want to be in. But what happened? And then Israel remained.

Literally the next page, turn to chapter 25. Now, look at chapter 25, number 25, right at the top of the page. And Israel remained in the Acacia Road.

And the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab, were being drawn into the sacrifices of the different gods. And finally, God sent a terrible plague now against them. 24,000 people killed, until Phinehas finally was so zealous over it that he went and stabbed through two of them to put an end to the plague.

And God said he made atonement there that way. And then it was stopped. Terrible story.

And we have this bookends of where they were walking in faith. They messed up, but they were walking in faith and powerful, invincible, holy, separated. And then the other end, where they fell again to seduction.

We get just a few, I'm coming to an end here. We get just a few indications of what happened. And this is gonna come out in the rest of our, what happened? How could a people of God who were purified, who were clear, who were walking with victory, who were seeing the victory of God, how could it be? Besides the fact that they remained, they sat still.

Later on, we get a little detail in chapter 31. And Moses said to them, have you kept all the women alive? They're getting mad at him that they've left these people. Look, these women caused the children of Israel.

Watch, through the counsel of Balaam to trespass against the Lord. What Balaam learned to do was to seduce the people of God. The other verses give us a little more indications, and it's really important that we understand this as a spiritual soldier.

Second Peter 2.15, they have left the straight road. They were in the straight road, but they left the straight road and have gone astray, following the road of Balaam, son of Bezor, who loved the wages of doing wrong. Apparently he was paid there.

Look, we get a little indication here. And Jude tells us, woe to them for they go the way of Cain and abandon themselves to Balaam's heir for the sake of gain and perish in Korah's rebellion. And even more indications is in Revelation.

He tells us this. But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold the teachings of Balaam, and then this is what it is, watch, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and engage in sexual immorality.

Wow. An invincible army of God, invincible people, were clear, walking with God. No curse can get them.

All that you can see is Satan just trying every one of these battles and their shield was just bouncing off until they seduced them. And I just find it, I don't even know what to do with this. If Balak would have been the prophet-ish, taught the government how to do it.

Something in there, I don't know. But this is how they failed. Slow seduction.

Staying put, no longer they're on the move, no longer they're fighting anymore, they're just hanging out in the acacia, they're taking a good time, and now they're giving up. You know, in the Aesop's fable, it was over 500 years BC, there was a slave who wrote these fables that became part of the ancient world. And there's this interesting fable, very good for us to hear, about a fight between the north wind and the sun.

You heard this? And so the north wind and the sun were arguing, who can blow the coat off of this traveler? I can blow the coat off, I'll get the coat off that traveler. No, you can't. And so the sun and the wind were arguing, and the wind said, stand back, I'll take this.

So he took it, and he blew, and he blew, and he blew on the traveler to try to get this coat off. Finally, the north wind gave up, and said, wow. And every time he blew, he would just hunker down, and hold his coat, and fight, and he made it.

And the sun just kind of smiled, and he said, I'll have that in no time. So he just started to shine on him, shine, and shine, and shine. So finally, the traveler sat down, woo, I better take this coat off.

And took his coat off, and relaxed, and the sun smiled. This, time, and time, and time, is the way that God gets to us. You're here this week, is this you? I tell you, I fight this every day, and I find it a lot harder now that I'm 56, than when I was 16, or 26 more, that the desire to just stop fighting, to give up, to enjoy the enchanted ground.

Remember in the Pilgrim's Progress, it was the enchanted ground that was the hardest test. Is this you? I have to pray this prayer, you can pray this too. Look what David prayed.

Consider and hear me, oh Lord, Psalm 13, three. Consider and hear me, oh Lord, my God. Enlighten my eyes, in other words, wake me up, lest I sleep the sleep of death.

That's what happens to me. Just give up, so, in summary, spiritual soldier, remember these things, and I will give a summary, and we will end. The spiritual soldiers that we saw in the book of Numbers, were a people dwelling alone, not reckoning itself among the nations.

Is that you? If it's not, ask this week in which ways you are fraternizing with the enemy. Number two, he has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen wickedness in Israel. If you're here today and your conscience is convicting you, or you're here and you've never given your heart, your life to Jesus Christ, and you feel the weight of sin, or there's something even if you're older, and you've been a Christian for years, but you know there's something that you need to get right, just like the Israelites did, get it right this week, so that you can have this, I have not observed iniquity in Jacob.

Number three, the Lord God is with him. You want that indwelling presence of God, and the shout of a king is among them. I want you to also to get a purpose this week, to be revived in your purpose for the church, and for the people of God, and to give glory to God, to spread his name across the world, and to give glory to the son of God, Jesus Christ.

Get that shout within you. And number 23, do you also this, number four, for there is no sorcery against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel. So that you can say, what has God done? And then also finally, that Israel remained in the occasion.

So, we're gonna look again at this week, on tomorrow, I will be looking at the battle plan. I'm gonna be looking at ways to look at the Bible. I'm a very traditional theologian, and I'm gonna be going through a very orthodox faith, an orthodox Anabaptist faith, and looking, I'll show you my battle plan, and the plan of the word of God, just believing it and putting it into practice is what we're gonna be looking at tomorrow.

The battle plan, which is the scriptures. On Tuesday, we're gonna be looking at espionage, and infiltration, and subterfuge, and coming against the church. We're gonna be looking at media, and politics, and how the church loses out, and all these types of things.

On Wednesday, we'll be looking at the weapons of our warfare. We're gonna be looking at the ways the church has been meant to fight, and we're gonna talk about things of salvation. I'm gonna break up that a

little more with the conscience, and talk about that tool of the conscience, and how God is calling you to have a pure heart for him.

And then finally, we're gonna talk about kingdom building, and what it means to be the people of God on the move, spreading his kingdom finally on Thursday night. So again, but tonight, even tonight, God has convicted you of this. Remember that serpent that was put into the wilderness, and it was Jesus that brought that up in John chapter three.

And looking up in faith, God can rescue you, and save you. And if you wanna talk about that, you can see me afterwards, and we can pray. But I pray that every one of us will take this week of inventory, and look to God, and see what he has for us.

So let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for the word of God. We thank you for the church.

We thank you for the people of God. We thank you for a heritage that has been given to us. And dear God, I pray, Lord, that as the world just pulls at me, and the sleepiness of the ground wants me to stop, and all these things, and discouragements, and all those things, I pray, God, enliven, encourage, and lift up the heavy hands of everyone that is here tonight, Lord, and help us all to follow you more, and to glorify you with everything we have.

So be with us now, tonight, and for the rest of this week, that you would be glorified. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen.

Okay, so you are dismissed, and so tomorrow night, I think we will meet at the same time. Is that right? Yes, got a thumbs up, all right, that's it, you're dismissed.

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