

Message 05

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual warfare, personal revival, and the balance of sanctification, highlighting the need to be strong in the Lord and His mighty power.

Duration: 55:40

Scripture: Romans 10:15, Ephesians 5:1-6

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Perseverance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of standing firm in the face of trials and temptations. He uses the analogy of putting on the full armor of God to illustrate this concept. The speaker shares personal experiences of facing difficult situations and how he relied on God's grace to stand his ground. He also encourages the audience to be prepared for the day of evil by training and preparing themselves through smaller tests and challenges. The sermon concludes with a mention of the speaker's books and CDs available for further study and reflection.

Transcript

Yes, I was in Portugal at the time of the tsunami and overwhelmed by what I saw on television and immediately started, not immediately, but soon was in touch with Gary Dean, who's from this area. I was on the phone with him in Sri Lanka this morning and we started to mobilize prayer and started to rush finance out to that situation. And some of the areas I shared last night, it's like a tsunami happening every day.

And most of those areas I talked about last night from the Good Samaritan, there are that many people dying almost every month, every week. It's quite incredible, isn't it? Well, we appreciate your fervency at the book table. Remember, if the book is going to be sent or given away, you can just take it as a gift.

It'd be tremendous if some of these CDs, it's cost us a lot of money to convert cassette into CD, but the money's already spent. So now we want to get them out. And if you sent that CD set, it's entitled, If You're Not Called to Stay, Then Go.

I think it's a series I gave at a Bible college down in Texas. If you got that in, it's geared to young people. There's a lot of laughs somehow got into this, but it would give the chance to share some of the vision that's on our hearts with other people who are not here.

So you may want to think in terms of some of these CDs and cassettes. One of my books, one of the first books I ever wrote was called Hunger for Reality, and it seems to be out of print or out of stock. It's brought me 25,000 personal letters.

I've read all of them. And I did notice, however, on the table that the audio version of that book is available there on the book table. A friend of mine with Spear Books put Hunger for Reality onto audio CD, two CDs, and they're available.

I wanted to call your attention to this phenomenal book by A. W. Tozer. You may want to just read this this week in your quiet time. It's quotations from 15 or 20 of his other books.

Some of the strongest spiritual meat I've ever read. Chipping away at superficiality and unreality. Gems from Tozer.

And these you can have as a gift this morning. If you want one or two to give away to others, we have enough quantity. It's encouraging to see some coming out to pray with us at nine o'clock.

And there's a little leaflet about this. I think Moody Monthly printed this decades ago that I wrote. Whatever happened to the prayer meeting? Practical help to create a powerful prayer meeting.

This is free. Just pick it up. I wanted to again also mention Randy Alcorn's book, Grace and Truth.

This has been a huge struggle in my life. The whole thing of grace and forgiveness, big heartedness, going the extra mile, and truth. Where do we draw the line? What about discipline for people that are committing immorality in the church, in the ministry? Do we just say, hey, forgive me.

Somehow truth and grace, discipline, it's got to come together. And a lot of churches are missing this. And Randy Alcorn has written an easy to read short book on this subject, The Grace and Truth Paradox.

And again, it's just available for any donation. Don't forget these Gospels to give away to even non-Christians you may meet in your travels here. I finally got off this campus and went to this metropolis up the road of Plymouth.

I was just trying to mail a package to England, an express parcel, but this post office across the road, it just blew their circuits and they couldn't find the right form. And so they sent me to Plymouth. And that lady there managed to send my parcel of five cassette tapes filled with letters, most of which dictated from this famous place.

So as you meet people, give them a Gospel of John. How many of you have a struggle throwing away things? Are any of you into clutter, like my wife and I? Are there any others? It's like a big disease. And yet sometimes you get a victory.

You find something that someone else wanted to throw away, an old envelope, and you look in there and there's a check for a hundred dollars. So I find it hard to throw things away. And just before I came, I threw a lot of things in my suitcases, and it includes a whole lot of copies of the annual OM report for 1994.

And I would be so grateful if you would take these. I really don't care what you do with this, if you just take it, because I don't want to carry these back to England. But here's the interesting thing.

In my suitcase, I also put the 2004 annual report. Put those two together and you will see the 10 most phenomenal years of growth in the ministry of Operation Mobilization in answer to prayer. So 2004 and 94, they're yours.

They're at the literature table. Every day I put new items there. Some of my own personal books that I was reading, like this book about Anthony Norris Groves, one copy, probably in the whole of New England.

It's there. I read part of it this morning. It's a real thick and I thought I'm going to put this on the book table.

Hallelujah. Turn with me now to the book of Ephesians. One of the most important scriptures in my life is Ephesians chapter 6. To be honest, Ephesians 5 was almost equally as important.

In the early days, I guess for the first 20 years, everybody who came on OM had to memorize 10 chapters in God's Word, as we were very strong on memorizing scripture. Thank you for praying for my voice. It seems a lot better today.

So appreciate your prayers. And Ephesians 6 is one of the truly great motivating passages in the Word of God. And we're just going to look at that together, starting at verse 10.

Ephesians 6 verse 10. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so they may take your stand against the devil's schemes.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, the rulers against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, against spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms. Wow, that is heavy. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground.

And after you have done everything to stand, stand firm then with a belt of truth, buckled about your waist, with a breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with a readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, well, take the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

With this in mind, be alert. Always keep on praying for all the saints. Wow.

Pray also for me. You know, Paul wasn't afraid to ask prayer for himself. And though I have a lot of people pray for me, some of my best prayer partners, another one last week, they're going to heaven.

And so I'm always looking for new people willing to pray for my wife and I. As we take about 300 meetings a year in 20 or 30 countries a year, and often are battling especially discouragement. My wife is always battling tiredness. I'm always battling discouragement.

But if God puts it on your heart, we'd be happy to give you one of our prayer letters or my card that has a little picture of my wife in on it and I on it. Some of you already have that, that you can pray for us. Pray also for me, back to verse 19, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I may fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.

He wrote some of his epistles from prison. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. And then it gets into that final greeting.

And I think these greetings are important because they show how Paul was so interested in individuals. Though sometimes it appears that my big thing is the big vision. Actually, the biggest thing in my life on an hour-by-hour basis is just individuals.

Like a few of you who have known me and have traveled here, that we may have a meal together and speak together. And other people that I'm able to communicate by email or by telephone. And so this greeting, I believe, is also important.

Tychicus, verse 21, their dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord will tell you everything. See, information is also important, so that you may also know how I am and what I'm doing. I'm sending them to you for this purpose, that you may know how we are, that we may encourage you.

Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ greets to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. Isn't that a great scripture? Though I've been going through Ephesians, and Ephesians has been going through me for 50 years, I get excited.

I often listen to it on tape, some days Spanish, some days English, and I'm excited about the scripture. Let's go back and start at verse 10. Of course, we should read the whole book.

As we through the whole book, there's exhortations to children and parents. There's deep challenges about holiness right through chapter 5, the imitators of God. Therefore, as dearly loved children, verse 1 of chapter 5, live a life of love, just as Christ loved us, gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

We have the great prayer for the Ephesians there, in chapter 3. We have the challenge about the unity of the body in chapter 4. We have that great challenge about salvation in Christ, about being alive in Christ. As for you, chapter 2, verse 1, as for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of the world and of the rulers of the kingdom of the air, the Spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature, following its desires and thoughts like the rest.

We were by nature objects of wrath, but because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in trespasses, in sins. Have not you been perplexed by all the prayer for revival for the last ten years and millions of dollars to promote that in books and leaflets and conferences? Some people even getting quite ill trying to pray and fast for 40 days when previously they never even fasted for two days. All this talk about the Welsh revival, talk about the Hebrides revival.

A friend of mine is with a party visiting the Hebrides right now to get the feeling of that little, little tiny revival in those unknown islands that never affected hardly anything in the rest of Britain. And when I went up there, I found most of the people judgmental, Pharisaical legalists, hardly winning anyone to Christ. Is this what we're all praying for? Some big bang revival? Now don't misunderstand me.

I praise God for what he did in the Hebrides. I praise God for what he did in Wales, what he did here in Boston, I think years ago. But I don't believe that's the normal way that God works.

I believe that's just an unusual manifestation that happens occasionally. Satan immediately counterattacks it. After the Welsh revival, there was phenomenal counterattacks on Jesse Penn Lewis, the leader of that revival.

He got into a horrendous state. He got counsel from, I mean, Evan Roberts. Did I say Jesse Penn Lewis? Evan Roberts was the leader of the revival, but Jesse Penn Lewis helped him come through his terrible time.

And she ended up writing one of the most difficult, strongest books about spiritual warfare ever written. I don't recommend it. It's too heavy.

Called War on the Saints. But I believe Ephesians shows us that plan A revival is Jesus. We are alive in Christ.

And it is our provision in what Jesus did on the cross, to live in personal revival. If through prayer and tears we, like Evan Roberts, are a spark that leads to a great outpouring, praise the Lord. I know people that put everything into praying for this Big Bang revival, and a huge percentage of them are dead.

And it never happened. What? Is God asleep? He didn't hear all this prayer? All this fasting? No. We missed the point of his word.

The word revival is not even found in the New Testament. Again, I'm not saying those things are not revival. Some writers were very clear to point out that what God was doing through Billy Graham was not revival.

Yeah. You know, only a few million people saved around the world, but that was not revival. That's just, well, that's evangelism.

And as they say it, you can, you in their voice, that's not really what we want. That's not really that important. And so we put things in boxes.

We have the church growth box. We have the revival box. We have the emerging church box.

We have the Pentecostal box and the Baptist box. And I just believe as you get into the Word of God, you will see that a lot of your boxes, you know, will fall apart. And you will begin to see that Christ is all in all.

And if you know him and if you submit to him on a daily basis, then in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Direct quote from Colossians. Vance Havner, one of my favorite preachers from the southern part of America, who was surely one of the most outspoken prophets our nation ever knew.

I remember preaching with Vance at a pastor's conference at Moody Bible Institute. And I tell you, half the pastors came forward when he was done to recommit their lives and to repent. Vance Havner would say, if we knew more about vival, we wouldn't need to emphasize so much revival.

What do you mean? Vival. Ephesians. We are alive in Jesus Christ.

We have been quickened, some translations say. So there's a lot in the book of Ephesians. And therefore it's even more amazing that we get here toward the end in chapter 6 and we get this word, finally.

This is pretty important, right? Finally. And then we have this beautiful phrase, be strong in the Lord. Have you ever noticed how much tension and division there is among the Lord's people on the issue of sanctification? Have you ever noticed that? Do you know how many thousands of Christian books there are basically on the subject of sanctification or holiness of living? And you get one group, and I've met some of them, if there's anything in your vocabulary that gives the idea you're going to do something, they

think you're carnal.

And they have their favorite cliché, we can't do anything. Only Christ. Of course that's basically true.

It can lead to an unbiblical emphasis, because there are so many verses that indicate we do have to do something. Yield your members unto righteousness, the Word of God says. Put on, you, put on the whole armor of God.

And I just thank Jesus as I started to get into that kind of passive sanctification thinking, believing that was the way of humility. And I wanted humility, you know, more than almost anything in my life. I knew I was such an arrogant, needy character.

And I read Andrew Murray's book on humility. I remember I was in Bombay, India. I thought I would come unglued reading this book.

And I almost made the mistake of missing my part. Jesus said, if any person come after me, let him deny self, take up a cross every day, and follow me. We have to do our part.

I usually get up quite early, I guess this morning it was around five. The light, no matter how early I get up here in New Hampshire, the light. I don't know, there's somebody outside my cabin with a giant flashlight, but the light seems to be up.

But I know that often in the morning, for me, it takes a bit of push to get out of bed. Alan Bedford, I think it was Alan Redpath who used to share the need for blanket victory, to be able to get the blanket, especially in the winter. And in England in the winter, when I first moved to England, they didn't have central heating.

The bedrooms were like refrigerators. And when you woke up, you did not want to get out of bed. Where I first lived, I had to get out and light a wood and coal fire in the living room to get some heat.

So I understand the challenge of blanket victory. Somehow, of course, in those environments, you learn how to wrap the blanket around you when you get out of bed, and that can keep you warm. So I believe this is one more of those great verses that has that balance.

Be strong in the Lord. Be strong in the Lord. Your part, God's part.

Ultimately, of course, the bottom line, it's all God's part. He's given us free will. And that's why these passages like Ephesians 6 are so important.

One of my favorite preachers, and we had him come and visit our ship on one occasion around 1977, was Dr. Lloyd-Jones. Not so well-known in America, but considered perhaps the greatest theologian in Europe over a period of 30 years. And Dr. Lloyd-Jones there at Westminster Chapel in London, I think he spent months in Ephesians.

So ours is more or less just like a snack compared to what you would get from Lloyd-Jones. Do you remember that book by those famous Puritans from years ago? The Armor of God. That thick, expounding Ephesians.

Here we have some of the spiritual meat for being God's marathon long-distant runners. Be strong in the Lord and His mighty power. Again, we have churches and individuals that when we speak about power, they always want to talk about people being saved or people being healed or blessing, answers to prayer.

But if you study a number of passages like Corinth, several passages in Corinthians, you will see that the power of God also is manifest when we endure testing. In that passage in Corinthians about suffering and difficulty and heartbreak and setbacks, right in the middle of that we have that word, the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. Well, that seems like a contradiction.

Where's the power? If the apostle Paul had to go through all this suffering and all the difficulty, the power of God can be manifest in many different ways in His sovereign purposes. But we need to move on. Verse 11 gives a clear command.

It puts the onus back on us. Put on the full armor of God, that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. I guess one of the hardest things to talk to people about is the devil, together with hell.

Bill Bright, before he died, wrote a book, Heaven or Hell, You Choose. Wow. I don't know why my sister has it sitting in the bathroom at her house in New Jersey.

So, you know, you go and sit in there and there's this book, Heaven or Hell, You Choose. So her bathroom might be becoming an evangelistic center. It is amazing the way God uses the printed page.

A man in Argentina, I wrote about this in my book on literature, he was going to commit suicide and he found a Gospel of John in the tree. And he read it and was saved and did not take his own life. I think it was in one of the Carolinas years ago, a guy was going door to door with literature and he banged on the door, rang the bell, and the man came down.

He was not very happy. He took the piece of literature and closed the door. He went back there weeks later.

The man was so excited to see him. He said, come in, I want to show you something. He went up to the attic.

There was a box. He said, when you came to my door, I was standing on the box with this noose. On my neck to take my own life.

Your knock or doorbell irritated me, so I went down. You gave me this tract and I knelt by the side of this box and surrendered my life to Jesus Christ some days ago. Thank you for coming back and visiting me.

Such is the power of the word of God. Another man on a ship went up to the crow's nest and those old-fashioned ships and someone had put a gospel tract in the crow's nest and he got saved there in the crow's nest by the grace of God before he ever came down. The power of the word of God.

Some people overemphasize Satan. Other people don't mention Satan. But I believe the balance is found in the scriptures.

And we're looking at the scriptures. And in our churches today, there is a need to go back to expounding the scriptures as we're trying to do this morning. It's not the only way to preach.

We again don't want to get into judgmentalism. But I'm convinced this movement is quite strong in Great Britain. And it's over here as well, trying to get people to look into the scriptures.

And that's what we're trying to do during most of our sessions this week. When Dr. Lloyd-Jones, who is a great Bible expositor, went into the scriptures, he also, the great Lloyd-Jones, would go on various

tangents, making comments about different things. So forgive me if sometimes I go off and make comments about things that are triggered in my mind by the word of God.

But we are in a spiritual warfare. And when you come on vacation, Satan does not take a holiday. My wife and I were on vacation up in an island off the coast of Scotland, and she had a terrible fall.

A little stone outside the cabin slipped, and I tell you, it was a terrible time. But accidents happen on holidays, on vacations. And I believe as we get older, we need to be careful.

We need to know our own limitations. My wife's sister, at a rather old age, decided to climb a tree. It's the male ego.

We like to prove that we can still do things that we did, you know, 20 years ago. And so he climbed the tree, and he fell. He blamed it on her, and he was a paraplegic for the rest of his life, and he died a pretty miserable man.

It seems that we men find it more difficult to live with our limitations, our health limitations, than women. Probably a verbal generalization. But I, I would encourage you, before you launch into the day, whether you're on vacation or back home, whether you're in technical retirement or working for Lloyd's Bank, to seek God at the beginning of the day.

To get into the word of God, to let the word of God get into you. To commit various things you're thinking about doing, the journey here, the chore or task in the back garden. To commit those things to the Lord, and then you can go forward by faith.

And I believe, then, if accidents happen, it's easier to live with them. Then we're just running along, we're running along, forgetting God, forgetting His word, no time to pray. And then, something terrible happens.

We will find it harder to live with that. Though God is merciful. So I believe it is important to understand what this says.

There is a real devil. Do you think the devil is just out to attack George Burwer? Because he's, you know, out in mission work? You are just as important to God. You think His love for me is greater than His love for you? Oh, give me a break! His love is powerful for everybody.

Handicapped people. I love handicapped people. We work with handicapped people.

Johnny Erickson Todd is one of my heroes. She gave one of the greatest messages in the whole history of OM at an OM conference. I was with her in Lausanne when she had this seminar with handicapped people.

And they all came out. They weren't all handicapped. Some were working among the handicapped.

And they all came out and had a parade around the rest of us. Here I was listening to that on tape this morning as I went on the blue walk. Have you been on the walks around here? You get a map.

How many have been on the walks? How many have been on the blue walk? The red walk? This is a walker's paradise. Now somebody warned me that in New Hampshire the mosquito was the state bird. And so I discovered that in my bee walk this morning.

I think the mosquitoes are aware of this bee walk. And that some nice, sweet people go walking through there. So you may want to put a little repellent on as you go out into the woods and enjoy God's creation.

And I was listening to those words again from Peter. Satan is a roaring lion. Seeketh whom he may devour.

That's why we need to wear this armor. It's for our own spiritual protection. It's for the protection of the church.

Because the devil gets into the church through the weakest link. You don't want to be the weak link. The enemy can get into your church or into your fellowship.

So this is a serious challenge. This is not something to just be listened to. This is something to respond to in biblical obedience.

Take your stand. Put the full armor of God. Take your stand against the devil's schemes.

In some of my books I talk about the various schemes of the enemy. How Satan tries to use lust. How Satan tries to use discouragement.

How Satan likes to attack relationships. How Satan likes to use unforgiveness. Do you think Satan is just interested in small things? I just had supper with a friend.

Her sister was murdered by her churchgoing husband. Murdered. He denied it until found guilty in court.

He's got a life sentence. He has children and a dead wife. He got caught because he was stupid enough to tell this other woman he was infatuated with, that's why he was going to murder his wife, that he had done it.

And they got it on tape. I mean, this was certainly not the perfect murder. I just heard of another case where someone attempted this.

Somehow the woman was delivered and it never happened. How can you? Billy Graham in his book, his amazing book, Peace with God, one of the first Christian books in my life, says, you know, if there's no devil, then I'd like to know who is responsible for all this. Let's get him.

I don't think he had that last sentence. I added that. This is so real.

This is something that was burned into my soul when I was 17 years of age, that I'm a warrior, that I have to wear God's armor, that I can't fool around with discouragement or lust. I can't fool around with infatuation. I also got madly infatuated once with a woman in Europe.

I thought I was going to go out of my mind, but I knew it was from the devil. I knew that as nice this feeling may be, it was from the pit and it never impacted me at all. My wife and I were even able to share and pray together.

And within a year, I never saw the woman much, but it was an embarrassment when she joined OM. Within a year, it disappeared. I want to tell any of you men, infatuation with other women, if you're a married man, it's from Satan.

It plays on your most vulnerable emotion, especially if your marriage is in jeopardy or there's some other emotional complexity. And you need to know that thousands of Christian leaders in America, yes, thousands, in my lifetime, at least thousands, have sold their soul for infatuation. And I want to tell you, there's tens of thousands that have not.

There's tens of thousands that have not. And we need to emphasize both. A woman also can be infatuated.

I wouldn't understand as much of that as what it is for men. But we know Satan as a roaring lion seeketh whom he may devour. He has schemes, he has strategies, he has plans.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Even in this great global situation with Islam, it is Satan who is behind this. It is not firstly Bin Laden or Saddam Hussein.

It is Satan who is behind this master plan to destroy and to kill and to bring chaos upon the world. Of course, it's a mystery why God doesn't just close it all down, for he is sovereign. And that we will only fully understand in heaven, though there are great books written on that subject, which I'm sure some of you have read, like the writings, the brilliant writings of C.S. Lewis.

So our struggles are not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the dark world, against spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms. I'm aware that some people go into extremes. I'm aware of the controversy of Frank Peretti's book, *Piercing the Darkness*.

Those books got people, some people into extreme things in the area of the devil. And those books are not, they are not theology. Some people say they may not even be based on good theology.

But the positive thing is about those books, it's made people aware of spiritual warfare. It's made people aware of the power of prayer. And I'm sure Frank Peretti is a man of God.

Again, back to God's word, is what I recommend. Against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, spiritual forces and evil in heavenly realms. Whoa, heavenly realms.

So powerful. Verse 13, Therefore, and here we get to our response, in the light of all this, everything else I've shared about Satan's subtle attacks against the Welsh Revival, against my friend's sister, in the light of this, we've got to put on the full armor of God. So brothers and sisters, to try to summarize, wearing God's armor is not optional.

Wearing God's armor is also when you're on holiday. Sometimes when my wife and I go on a break, guess what? We end up in a big argument. Now I know all of you married couples, I'm sure you're all doing a lot better than my wife and I, and you're just the happy clappies who never argue, and you've got the perfect marriage, and I'd love you to autograph my Bible, except this is Roy's Bible, so maybe you better not autograph it.

But my wife and I are so different, we think so differently, we react, I'm the reactionary type. We can be on a time when we're supposed to be resting, we're supposed to be refueling, we get in an argument, and if we have the kids and the grandkids with us, it ends up the most draining day of the past ten days, or week, or month. We should quickly bounce back from that, realizing that's not unusual.

Satan didn't schedule in your holiday, and so he may attack you. My wife and I have one of our biggest arguments, driving to the OM prayer meeting. That's always great, isn't it? You're driving to the prayer meeting, God's warriors taking on the enemy, and you're having an argument.

What was this argument about? Some serious stuff, the sovereignty of God, and how it works out in the family, or some other deep problem. We just found out we have terminal cancer, we're having a big discussion. No! The argument was concerning what route to take.

It was only five miles. It was only five miles. We were not going off, you know, to Alaska, and what did it matter what route? But I remember well accusing her of being stubborn, accusing her of other things that I don't want to repeat here this morning as this is being recorded.

Put on the whole armor of God, whether you're home, whether you're on the road, so that when the day of evil comes, and of course I believe that's referring to a time of bigger testing, and my wife and I had that, when our second son walked away from Jesus, and he shared what he was into. That was one of the most difficult days in our lives, but we were ready, and even my reaction to him was a sanctified reaction that helped in the ongoing relationship as he had walked away from his Christian faith. So the evil day will come, the day of testing, the day of difficulty.

I remember when I was teaching leaders up in Nepal many years ago, and I said, when these little tests come in your life, they are to train you for the day when a bigger test will come. I don't know if I've said that much since then, but I believe it. It may not be true in every single situation.

So when there are little difficulties, and little things nagging you, losing something, is that your favorite thing? Losing your keys so you cannot get back into the house. I took my grandson to the cinema in one of my son's old cars, and I locked us out of the car. It's the kind of car you lock yourself out.

So we come out of the cinema after seeing Star Wars, you know, first trilogy, part three, I'm sure it's your favorite film. It's a little bit dark, and we try to get in the car, and we're locked out. You know, your grandson looks at you, you know, Christian leader, man of tremendous wisdom and discernment, power of prayer, he's heard me preach, locked out of the car.

But the little tests, the little tests that come upon us, the medium-sized tests that come upon us, are to help train us and prepare us for the day of evil, when you may have the most horrendous temptation and difficulty in your life. And at that time, as a trained disciple of Jesus, you'll be able to stand fast. Therefore, put on the full armor of God.

You may, when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground. When I heard that we lost our ship off the coast of South America, I stood my ground by God's grace. When I heard that terrorists attacked our other ship in the Philippines, and two teenagers were dead, by God's grace, I stood on that solid ground in prayer, and all that had to be done in connection with the parents.

What a tremendous passage of Scripture. Verse 14, stand firm. A little bit repetitious, isn't it? You know, what is this? Does God think we're weak? Does God think we need to hear things twice? You know, God doesn't think that.

He knows. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. It's repeated, what, six or seven times in the Word of God? And so here, we have a little bit of repetition, verse 14.

I honor this conference center for giving the Word of God central place. I know that is not popular in postmodern society. I'm reading a new book about that right now, and I'm not against some of the experimentation that's done by postmodern thinkers who love Jesus and are just trying to do things in a different way.

You know, really serious things, like putting the chairs in a circle instead of in lines. You know, if somebody wants to do that, I'm not going to get in a fight over them. But I believe there's a danger in some of the emerging church, some of the postmodern thinking, there's a danger that the Word of God is no longer central.

The teaching and the preaching and the proclamation of the Word of God is no longer central. In fact, some theologians are ridiculing preaching at all. They are saying preaching is an outmoded style of communication.

It's interesting that all the leaders of nations still give big speeches, and that our nation turns on the television when the president speaks, and tens of millions of people are glued to his words and what he's going to say. And I believe we must continue to keep the teaching and preaching of the Word of God central. It will be an ongoing struggle to find the balance between worship and the Word, between doing and going and giving.

And certainly with young people, we need to be creative. But praise God when people like yourself are willing to give an hour in the morning, prime time, and just get into the Scriptures together. And of course, you can do this on your own as well, in your own cabin.

So look at the details. Truth, the belt of truth, which we've just been talking about. The breastplate of righteousness.

Surely that's tied in with salvation in Jesus Christ. With your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. I'm reminded of those words in Romans, chapter 10, verse 15.

How will they go? How will they preach unless they are sent? And remember the next line? Blessed are the feet. I've always found that a little amusing because that's another difficult area in my marriage. My feet, my socks, my tendency not to wash enough.

You know, my wife's wanting to shower every day. You know, she's got the whole morning regimented to shower. And, you know, I just get out of bed, go for it.

And I do, you know, occasionally shower. I'm not against showers. And so my feet have been a stumbling block.

And my socks, sometimes I'm in a hurry, I just toss them. And my wife finds one smelly sock. And then I seem to be gifted in losing one of the socks.

My wife has a special place in her drawer where all these single socks, she's put them in there by faith, hoping that someday the mate, you know, the mate will show up for one of my socks. If I have one of my sock mates, maybe Roy Elzenbrook, you could give it to me and I'll give it to my wife and that will be one less single sock in the single sock department of this special drawer that my wife organized. My wife feels that I'm disorganized.

Do any of you husbands get that kind of guilt trip put on you by your wife? Well, praise the Lord because she's true, she's correct. Oh, what a passage. Breastplate of righteousness, your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take the shield of faith. I guess that's the thing I've tended to emphasize the most when I'm preaching from other passages, I bring in this passage, the shield of faith, because I have a lot of struggles in my Christian life, a lot of struggles and a lot of questions and a lot of doubts. And I have to again and again just pick up the shield of faith.

I've been wrestling with this Korean trip coming at me and feeling emotional struggle about that. I just grab that shield of faith. I'm going to get on the airplane by faith.

I'm going to get back into the Korean culture where I always make some mistakes by faith. I'm going to get back to eating kimchi, which I can't stand, but I have to try to smile as I eat it by faith. We need the shield of faith for the big challenges.

We need the shield of faith for the small challenges. Driving with my 14-year-old grandson who just got his permit down a highway in Idaho a couple of weeks ago. It's the shield of faith that kept me from saying something hurtful because grandchildren will remember those negative things.

Praise God for his word. The shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one, that arrow of lust, that arrow of discouragement, that arrow of unbelief, the shield of faith is God's weapon. Some people, and this is incredibly important, they have tried to say that spiritual warfare is just a certain kind of thing.

We go out on a prayer walk and we pray that principalities in Afghanistan, for example, where they've had prayer walks, and I'm not necessarily against them, but we're going to tear down these strongholds. And some of the prayer walks, the language has got into the local newspaper, and it makes local people think we're crazy. Some of the things we do as Christians in spiritual warfare, and that is only one aspect of spiritual warfare.

This morning we've been dealing with spiritual warfare in a more general, overall emphasis as seen in this passage. But I believe we need a lot of wisdom in what we say about spiritual warfare publicly, because the average person today does not know what you're talking about. And yet we can know, and we can hide these truths in our heart, even as Mary did, concerning certain things about Jesus.

So we have the shield of faith, we extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one, we also have the settlement of salvation, which again, as the passage comes to a close, reemphasizes all that Christ has done for us. And then we take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And what a danger, even sometimes in evangelism, if we lay the sword of the Spirit to one side, and we trust all kinds of other methodology.

There may be a place for many of these things, but I believe the Word of God is central. And prayer in the Spirit, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests. I want to be honest, I've looked across the world for 50 years for men and women of prayer.

Men and women who take verses like this seriously. And I have not found many. Again, I'm sure many of them just keep it secret, and there are men and women of prayer that I have met that I wouldn't know.

I'm sure many of you are men and women of prayer. I wouldn't just know that through talking to you for a few minutes. So bless every one of you who are men and women of prayer, who are praying on all occasions, who are praying for all kinds of people, all kinds of situations.

I'm reminded of Thessalonians, pray without ceasing. And many of the setbacks in the American church, and there have been many, even in these great famous churches, have been ripped apart by every kind of sin, every kind of transgression. And I believe much of it is linked with prayerlessness.

It's linked with the fact that thousands of pastors threw the prayer meeting out the window 30 years ago, when a theologian in a famous book said, anything in the church you have to push, like the prayer meeting, forget it, it's not worth it. And 1,000 prayer meetings across America, from Maine to California, were canceled. And today, we are largely a prayerless church.

And then we wonder why our young people are in such a mess. And so much, so much unnecessary divorce, so much immorality, so many people, even leaders, caught up into the world of pornography. We are paying a bitter price in our country for the laying aside of spiritual warfare and the ministry of prayer.

I know these words are strong. I don't say them lightly. I have many people that I'm accountable to that are actually urging me not to give up, giving an occasional strong word concerning the armor of God, concerning spiritual warfare, concerning the ministry of prayer.

Let us take His word more seriously because of this hour together. Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank You for Your holy word.

Like a two-edged sword, it cuts in to the very inner being of our heart. And we come, we come in brokenness and surrender, realizing we have failed, realizing at times we have not worn this whole armor. We've left the shield of faith to one side and left the sword of the Spirit back in the closet.

And we come to You somehow to recommit our lives, to be Your men, to be Your women, to go where You want us to go, to do what You want us to do. And Lord, even as we receive this, we're still vulnerable. We're still very human.

We may not even know what to say to one another throughout this day because there's been a strong word to our hearts. But, O Lord, enable us not to be hearers of the word, but doers. For we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. For more information, visit www.fema.org

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