

Time for War

by Glenn Meldrum

The church needs to understand that war is taking place in our lives and that we need to engage in spiritual warfare to be a threat to the devil.

Duration: 1:02:32

Scripture: Psalm 144:1, Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:49, 1 Peter 1:13

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by quoting Psalm 144:1-5, where David praises God as his rock, fortress, and deliverer. The preacher then reflects on the reality of war and the changing nature of life, drawing from his brother's experience in boot camp. He emphasizes the importance of unity and dependence on others, rather than individualism. The preacher suggests that just as physical battles take place in the world, there is also a spiritual war happening within us.

Transcript

For more messages by Glenn Meldrum and His Presence Ministries, go to www.ihpministry.com. You are welcome to make additional copies of this CD for free distribution. Turn with me to Psalms 144. Whether we like it or not, we're called to war.

Now we can be a POW and just be some captive, and so I'm a Christian, I'm just a POW, and so I'm stuck here, I'm not going to do anything because I can't, because I'm just a POW. Or you can be in the hospital and you were wounded in action, and you know what's so strange is you have Christians that have been wounded in action, and they've been in the same hospital for the last 10, 20 years, and in that same hospital won't get out of it because they think it's comfortable, and so they've got stuck in that situation, they don't want out of it. Or you can be somebody on the front lines, or whatever, there's a whole host of situations, but what I really see is going on is the majority of the church is checking out of the battle.

They don't want to battle because the lies of secular world has crept into the church that life is about personal happiness and personal fulfillment, and you know what happens? If war's going on and life's about personal happiness, you want to go some other place. You don't want to be where the war is, so you go to some other situation. Well, what we're going to do is we're going to look at a little bit of what David has to say about war.

David was a man of war, but David knew war. He understood this, so he is speaking from experience, from knowledge as a warrior, and he's speaking some things that is very interesting as we begin to look at this, and we're going to look at just the first five verses of Psalms 144. We're going to see that he says some things that do not make sense from a natural standpoint, so we must understand that what he's saying is he's referring to warfare on a spiritual standpoint, on the reality of what goes on inside of us, and he makes some very profound pointsets here.

And so let's begin in the first verse. Praise be to the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving God, my fortress, my stronghold, and my deliverer, my shield in whom I take refuge, who subdues people under me.

O Lord, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him? Man is like a breath, his days are like a fleeing shadow. Part your heavens, O Lord, and come down, touch the mountains so that they smoke. And so let's look at this.

I'm just going to take a couple of minutes, and I want to say something that's not necessarily going to convince you, but I pray that maybe it might make you think a little bit for a few minutes, and I want to touch on the reality that a war is taking place. A war is happening right now. Whether you like it or not, it is taking place.

And what we do so often, we think that we're in this battle, and the devil's all out just for us, and so we become self-absorbed with our problems, and look at ourself and say, poor me, I've been in such battles. And really, you know, I'm just going to be honest with this, is the majority of time what we're going through has nothing to do with the devil. We blame him for almost everything that's going on.

And maybe when we become a threat to the devil, then we'll have to concern about some real serious attacks from him. The majority of what's going on in our life is just we live in a fallen world, and we're facing the pain that people go through, whether Christian or non-Christian. May God bring us to the place that we become a threat to the devil, that we have to have some real spiritual warfare, and be able to really stand up and fight the devil.

But if I'm just whining over the little struggles I go through from day to day, am I really in this place that I could ever face a true spiritual battle for the souls of men, women, and children? And so we have to see there's a battle raging. It's raging seriously. In Revelation 12, I'll just read a couple of verses to you.

But in the 17th verse, it says, Then the dragon was enraged at the woman, and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring, those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Let me read that with a little commentary. Then the devil, the dragon, was enraged at the woman, referring to Israel, and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring, referring to the church, those who obey God's commandment and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Why was the devil out after the church? Because ultimately, the devil hates God. And his hatred for God is so complete and so absolute, and he knows that he can't hurt God. There is no competition between God and the devil, none.

I'm not going to get into that issue, but it's a wonderful thing to look at, on how God is so superior, infinitely superior. There is nothing of a competition, nothing, not in any way, shape, or form. And we have done great damage to ourselves to think as if there was some form of competition.

When Jesus went to hell, there was no battle that was there. He went to hell, he preached to those that were in bondage, he goes up to the devil, and the devil could do nothing, there was no arm wrestling, there were no words, he just says, give me those keys, it's over. We have to understand, hell knows who Jesus is.

They know who he is, there is no competition, none. And so, the devil goes out after the church, that which is made, ultimately, all of mankind, because we're made in the image of God, but uniquely the church, because we've been transformed by the power of God. We have now come, and through the working of the Spirit of God, are being shaped into his image, more and more all the time.

And so, there is a real battle that's raging, for every human being on this planet, but also to try and weaken the church and bring the church down. Matthew 14, 22, Immediately, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. And this is the situation after Jesus fed the 5,000.

And I want to upset our theology a little bit here, and I'm not going to take time to try and present a lot of arguments with this, but this here can upset our American concepts of Christianity. Listen to what it said again. Immediately, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side.

What happened when they got in the boat and started going to the other side? Anybody? You know what happened? They went right into a storm. Do you understand that it was absolutely Jesus' will for them to go into the storm? It was his will, it was his perfect will to go right into a raging storm. So, what would it have done if they stood up there and started rebuking the storm? I rebuke you in the name of Jesus.

It was Jesus that gave it. The devil's not going to leave. As a result, he had no part of it.

It was God that put them in the middle of that storm, because he wanted to do something that could only be done in that situation. And you know what that situation was? It was only there, when they were in the middle of the storm, would they see Jesus walk on water. Would they get a revelation of his divinity that they would have not seen in any other way.

Imagine if some of the apostles went and said, well, I'm not doing this, that's ridiculous. We go in that storm, we're going to die. It was irrelevant.

Do you know what it comes down to be in Jesus' day and age? Of what it was if you became a disciple of a master like that? You obeyed him no matter what he said. So Jesus would get in the boat, go to the other side. Some of the fishermen responded, says, we'll die out there, a storm's coming.

Jesus says, get in. Guess what they did? They got in and they went. Today, our concept is, I don't think so, God.

I have my rights, I'm going to do what I want. But it was only when they obeyed and they got in that boat that they saw Jesus walk on the water. Only in that situation.

Do you know, Jesus was never more in the will of the Father than when he hung on the cross? When his back was being ripped open. When a crown of thorns was put upon his head. When he walked along the road and they ripped the beard out of his face and they spat upon him.

He was never more in the will of the Father than in that situation. We have a concept that the struggles and the pain we go through is all the devil not understanding that God is wanting to take the pain and suffering we go through and transform us through it that we might become more godly people and people more aggressive for the kingdom of heaven. Instead, we've done the total opposite.

Pain comes into our life, we build walls, struggles come, we get out of things, we start moving back, we say, I don't want responsibility, look what's going on here and we check out of things rather than understanding that I've been called to battle. I've been called to war. And wouldn't it be absolutely madness? Absolute insanity as this guy goes and then he enters the military, he goes in the army or the marines and all of a sudden they're called to war and while they're in war he goes, this isn't what I planned for.

Bombs are dropping, I want out of here. It'd be ridiculous in the middle of war, guess what, bombs drop, bullets fly. That's the reality of what it is to expect anything else would be sheer madness.

To expect to walk down the battle lines and they're going to throw flowers at you would just be insanity, right? I mean, the enemy's out to kill you. To think anything else is the end of your life. And what we've done in the church today, we think life is about happiness so we want to walk down the battlefield lines and just have the enemy throw blessings at us.

Bless me, give me stuff, make me happy. Don't take my joy away. Don't go and make life difficult for me now.

Not understanding he's called us to the middle of the battle. He's called us to the place where the bombs are to be dropping and the bullets are flying. He didn't call us to a lazy boy.

He's never called one person yet that's one of his own children to a lazy boy. Never, ever, ever has he ever done that. But he has called us to the front lines.

Even to the front lines to the point where we die for the sake of Christ. Because there's something greater than even the continuing of our life and that's the glory of God. But you know what we think? We think the ultimate thing is our life.

Me. I'm the prize. I'm what it's all about.

Matthew 11, verse 12. Jesus, from the days of John the Baptist until now, the King of Heaven, suffers violence and the violent take it by force. Suffers violence.

We don't like that word. They don't translate it like that in other translations but I think this is a very accurate rendering of what the words are meaning. There's two ways this verse can be taken.

One way is that the violence of people wanting to get in. They want to get in the kingdom of God and those who want to get in the kingdom of God they'll be pressing and pushing in to get it. But ultimately what I believe it means, it means those who are in the kingdom are wanting to take a city.

So what the image is, is let's go back in time and let's go back into the days of Israel and Babylon and when the Babylonians came to take Jerusalem. Well, what do they do? They surround the city. They lay siege to the city.

They totally surround the city. They don't let anybody in and anybody out. They start to starve the city.

If they can cut off the water supply, they cut off the water supply so that they'll die sooner. So either they'll surrender or they'll die. And in the midst of that, they're still trying to build ramparts to get up into the city.

So what they'll do is they'll take their own people from around the city and make them as the slaves that will build these earthen banks going up the walls. They're not going to kill their sons and their daughters and their fathers that are out there. And so they build the ramps.

They watch the ramps coming up as they know that eventually when they're at the top, those armies are going to be rushing over the top of it and take them and kill them and slaughter them. And that is the image presented that we are to lay siege to the city and that we are willing to do it until it falls, until it bows its knee to the king of kings. The very concept of what we are called to do is not this tame little Christian thing.

It's this aggressive thing through the love of God to conquer the world through that love. And where is that today? He's calling us to the violence of biblical Christianity, which has nothing to do with the violence of what Islam does, of the taking of lives, but the violence of wanting to overcome the hordes of hell and the strongholds of hell that men and women might come to Christ, even to the laying down of our lives and the giving up of our possessions. Then in Luke, the 12th chapter and the 49th verse, Jesus says, I have come to bring fire on the earth and how I wish it were already kindled.

Do you know what Jesus was saying there? He says, I came not to give everybody a happy life. I came to set a fire. I came to set a fire.

I came to divide houses. Now, you know, Jesus is the creator of the family because he's the creator. So he created the family.

He loves the family. He loves the family being intact. He loves a father and a mother walking with with him and knowing God and the children being raised up under them in the fear of God.

And then that's his ideal. But you want to know what he'll destroy a family if only one or two will be saved out of it. He'll have a family torn to shreds, if need be, that one might be saved, that a father might be saved or a mother might be saved or a son might be saved.

Then he'll have it even that they have to flee for their lives as a result of that, because he loves so much that he will even allow that thing. He created the family to be destroyed for the sake of the kingdom of God. He says, how I wish a fire had come was burning through humanity.

How I wish it had come and was already being kindled and ultimately that would come after he died and rose again from the dead. And what was to be made manifest through the church as a church would go in the power of God to touch a hurting, dying world. And so there's a war on.

The question is, what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do about it in your own life? Are you going to design your life in such a way that you live in peace and ease and comfort that it's about you? Or are you going to begin to design your life in such a way saying, we are at war and I am out to take the land for my king. And whatever it costs me, whether it costs me money, whether it costs me time, whether it costs me my own blood, I will do whatever it takes to advance his kingdom for his glory. And it really comes down to be that question, what will we do? Now, let's begin to look at what David had to say.

David gives some interesting statements and some thought that we can glean from this that he speaks about warfare. And so he says, praise be to the Lord my rock. This is an interesting statement to begin everything that's going to be there.

Praise be to the Lord my rock. David understood kingdoms. He was a king.

And you know what this king did every spring? The king went to war to defend his lands. He would go to the outlying areas of his kingdom and make sure that there was peace. And where invaders had come, he would conquer them and take back his lands and defend them and so on.

It was a time where kings went and defended their realms. He saw kingdoms rise and he saw kingdoms fall. Not just that, David being a warrior, and before he was a warrior, he was a general.

Before he was a general, he was just a guy in the army. And before he was a guy in the army, he was a shepherd. And so he went through the ranks of what it was to come to the place to be king.

And so he knew what it was to have comrades and to have those that were under him to die. To have great men of battle to die, to see them fall in battle. He saw the literal reality that life changes before us, that in this world there is nothing, absolutely nothing that is stable, nothing that stays the same, nothing at all.

Everything changes whether we like it or not. David saw that kingdoms fall, kingdoms rise. Kings rise up and a king be taken.

One after another saw it as a reality and he comes to this place, you know what he says? Praise be to the Lord my rock. He came to comprehend one thing and the only thing that was stable and consistent in all of creation. And it wasn't creation itself, it was the God of creation.

You know what it's like when we start feeling our world out of control? When we start feeling things are going on that we can't handle? When life is not doing what we want it to do and we feel like we're losing that grip on it? But yet when that feeling is there, we have to understand that there is one that is greater than the experience that we are in, than the pain, than the change, than the struggles that we're going through. That there is a changeless God that is the only stable force. And if I will sink my life into him, if I will put my roots deep in him, I will have a stability even when the world changes, even if my life is facing the difficulties of change all around me.

He understood that the only hope was not in his ability, not in his wisdom, not in his talents as a king, as a warrior king. He understood there was no strength in himself, that the only hope he had was that place of knowing God is his rock and sinking his life deep into that because nothing else was sure. Have you felt that insecurity of this world? Have you felt the motions and the movement of it? I've never been in an earthquake.

I can imagine it being a very disconcerting feeling. You're standing there and you start feeling the earth shake under you. And if it's a little tremor, it's one thing, but imagine something that is just literally breaking the ground before you.

You feel that motion, you feel it, you feel the instability of it. But yet to know that in the midst of the chaos, of the madness that can take place, that there is a God that is absolutely stable if my life is truly fixed in him. And so he began with saying, before he gets into warfare, he begins with the statement, he says,

praise be to the Lord, my rock, my changeless God.

And then he brings out the idea that is so interesting here. He says, he is my loving God. This is really basic and especially it should be something that the church should grab hold of today because the love of God is preached in such an extensive way, in a way beyond what it should ultimately be preached because we've gone overboard with it, where we preach the love of God, love of God, love of God, love of God, to the neglect of other character traits of God and other dimensions of the word of God.

So really, we should have a knowledge that God loves me. But you know how many Christians, and I don't want you to raise your hand, but how many of you in your own life within the last year have questioned whether or not God loved you? Yet this very basic thing with this love of God teaching that is sweeping the country and filling books, you know, I don't want to get off onto it, but it's a humanistic, much of it is a humanistic underpinning to what it is. But yet still you have a church that does not understand the love of God, nor embraces it in a personal way.

And they're still questioning, does he love me? Does he love me? Why do we question that? If you're prospering, guess what, you don't question it. If your bills are paid, and there's no aches and pains in your body, and everything's fine and dandy, and the marriage is good, you're not questioning whether God loves you. When do you question him, whether he loves you or not? When pain comes, when change comes, when the earth is shifting under your feet, when you're feeling the struggles of life happen.

And Jesus goes and says, get into the boat. And you may not understand or fully obeying that as you understand it, but you're in the storm of life. And then you go say, oh God, do you still love me? Now this is such an important thing.

How am I ever going to go to battle and war for the souls of men, women, and children if I'm still at the basics of Christianity wondering if he loves me? Do you hear what I'm saying? How am I going to battle for the souls of men if I'm still in a place of self-absorption and questioning, oh God, oh God, do you love me, do you care? There are some truths that we have to grab hold of. We have to let it sink into our hearts. Let the reality of this changeless God that his love does not change.

Sink into my life that I might become a man or you might become a woman of God that knows the love of God and you stop the questioning of it. That you rest in its reality because he said it, that's all that matters. Whether you feel it or not is irrelevant.

It's the reality that he said it. He has made it to be a reality in your life that you have tasted of it. Now you must come to that place to believe.

How are you going to fight for the souls of men, women, and children if you are still questioning this basic thing? You know how we change that? Let me be real honest. How would we change that? That every time we question his love, we repent. We say, God, forgive me for that.

Change me. Help me to rest in what you promised me of what your love truly is. And that's how we overcome it.

That's how we deal with it. And if you have to pray that 100 times a day when you're in the midst of your suffering, then you pray it 100 times a day while you're going through that. And then he says, he is my fortress, my stronghold, and my refuge.

I want you to think about this. Why would a soldier say that God is his stronghold and his refuge? Well, you want to know what? When the bombs are falling and the bullets are flying, sometimes the army is advancing. Sometimes the invading army is bigger than we can deal with it.

And so we're retreating. And we're running to a place of stronghold, a place of security. And you know, this is something so phenomenal about this God.

He understands that we are frail. He understands our humanity, our weakness. And he understands that life can sometimes be overwhelming.

So he says, I will be your refuge. I will be this place that you can run into and have a place of security, a place of safety for a time. That is such a wonderful thing.

David understood that. There was times you face the enemy head on and you battle and you fight and you fight and you find yourself victorious. There's other times you look at it and say, I'm not going to win this battle.

If I don't regroup, we're never going to have another battle. And so to run back to the stronghold and regroup and get everything ready that you might make a fresh assault, there's wisdom. And so there's that place.

He is a refuge. When life is hard, I can go to him. And when I hurt, I can weep at his feet and know this God will hear my prayer.

And he is moved by my tears because even in Revelation, it says that he takes and stores our tears in a bottle because he's moved by them. And so here's this God that has made a place of escape for us. But you know what goes on so often is we've made that place of escape, not a vacation, not a place to get ourselves back together.

We have made it our permanent residence. Do you hear what I'm saying with that? We got hurt. And I have seen it so many times.

People hurt and what do they do? They go to the place of refuge. They start crying out to God, oh, heal my wounds. I hurt so bad.

And then they stay there. They stay in that place. It's one thing that a soldier gets hurt.

It's no shame in a soldier being hurt. When a man goes into battle, he's going to face the reality that he might die and he might get wounded. And if you get a man that's wounded, there's no disgrace.

You don't go up to that man and say, you stupid man, what did you get shot for? You know, the reality is when you're in battle, you're going to face those things. The problem is, is we go into that hospital and we stay there. And here the healing has taken place and we're all done and we're nice and well.

And we stay in the hospital bed because it's easier to check out of the kingdom of God than what it is to go on the front lines. But you know, there's no glory in hospital beds. There's no glory in lazy boys.

The glory is found on the front lines where we battle for the kingdom of God. When we stand before him, it's not going to matter all the nice stuff you had, the house, the possessions, the vacations, all the things you did, that's going to be irrelevant. You know what will matter? Is what you did for the kingdom of God.

And then he goes on and he says that the Lord was his deliverer. Now, why would a soldier say that he needed a deliverer? Well, basically because sometimes we get ourselves caught. Sometimes we get ourselves caught.

Now, usually when a man gets himself caught, he doesn't do it deliberately. Sometimes it's in a battle situation and they don't have enough force to stand against them and they're taken captive. Sometimes it can be a foolish act of the individual.

The soldier did something he shouldn't have done and brought himself in a place where he became vulnerable and was taken captive. And this is really where I think that's going on with David. Whether it was unintentional or intentional, we get ourselves occasionally caught in sin, caught in attitudes, caught in things that shouldn't be there.

And so somebody says something to us at church and we cop an attitude and we get bitter and we start getting this bitterness into us and it starts grabbing hold of us. And I'm glad that God will deliver us even when we foolishly get ourselves in things we shouldn't. Isn't that wonderful? That even when we do that, which is foolish, that which is contrary, we get ourselves in trouble and now we're bound in this particular sin.

And you want to know why I say bound? Because we have to grab hold of a reality about sin. You know what that is? That all sin is addictive. You know, we think that rehabs are about men and women that are strung out on drugs.

But you want to know what? Pride is more addictive than any drug ever was. Pride is more addictive. It gets into our character so deeply that we don't even understand it.

Because before a person's ever addicted to drugs, there's pride already working and operating in their life. Gossip is just as addictive as crack cocaine. Pornography, every sin you name, every single sin I could go through and list, every single sin is addictive to the human fallen nature.

And so what do we do? We open up the doors. We get ourselves caught. We become enslaved to a particular sin.

And what do we have to do in the midst of that slavery? Begin to cry out and say, oh God, deliver me. I foolishly got myself caught in bitterness. This person hurt me.

But instead of forgiving them like you told me to, I copped attitudes at them. I justified my anger and I let it brew inside of me. And I just built it and I said things and one thing after another.

God, I was foolish. I took a wrong turn. I did a wrong thing.

I got myself caught. Isn't it wonderful that David understood that in the midst of war that there's a deliverer there? And then he said that he's my shield and my victory. Here's the idea of what he's referring to.

He is shield and victory. Here's the idea of the strength that goes in and conquers. And he says who subdues people under him.

In that situation, David was literally looking at the subduing of his enemies. But you know how I think of this spiritually? I think of this as the subduing of, in one sense, the enemies of God. And you know what that is? That's revival.

The subduing of the people through the power of God. That there is a God that can give us the power to overcome the obstacles that keep men and women from Christ. Now let's look at a few of the thoughts where he says that the Lord is the one who trained his hands for battle and his fingers for war.

And that began with David when he was a shepherd. And so here is the shepherd being put into the test. We have to understand that I believe the situations that David faced, even as a shepherd, was ordained of God in ways that he didn't understand, just like it's ordained in ways in our lives that we don't comprehend.

Because God is bigger than what we can imagine and working in our lives in ways we can't even understand, even through the pain and even through the orchestrating of some of the trials we go through. And so here's David out there, and a big old bear comes and tries to take one of his lambs. And what does the scripture say? He went and he beat up the bear, in essence.

And then a lion comes. What'd he do? He beat up the lion. Right from the beginning, as a young man, God was teaching that young man how to war, teaching him how to have courage and stand in the face of it so that in a little bit of time, he would face Goliath.

And what a phenomenal story. We all know the story of Goliath. I love that story and how it refers this young boy when all the men were cowering, when all of them had no faith in this God and no faith in a God that could use them and defend them and protect them in the midst of that battle.

They're all cowering and here's this young, ruddy, good-looking man that goes out there and he goes not with a sword and a shield and all the things of typical warfare, goes with a sling. And in that situation, as this big old Goliath mocks him and says, what, do you send out dogs to me? And he says, this day I will have your head. And he runs at the man.

He runs at him. He doesn't go and say, well, let's talk about this later and negotiate or whatever. He runs at him and he says, God's given you into my hands.

And he goes after that man. What would happen if that was the heart of the church today to say, you are going to fall before my king. We are going to take this city for Christ and not through arrogance and not through self-will and being obnoxious, but through the love of God and through radical acts of kindness and trying to win a perishing world.

What would happen? What God could do is if that heart came into the church. That heart came into the church. And so he teaches our hands to war.

I want to look at some practical aspects about warfare. And I must say here, I'm speaking much out of ignorance because I was never in the military. I got saved when I was 18.

Just after I turned 18, the draft was done away with. And so I didn't have to go into the draft. And I was saved in this revival.

And I just had no idea or desire of going in the military, being in the midst of this move of God. So I never even considered it. But my brother, my oldest brother, he was a Marine.

Loved the Marines. He wanted to go to Nam. I'm not going to go through the whole story.

But they wouldn't let him go because he just got married. And then he wanted to go again. He signed up to go.

And he just had a child. So his commanding officer was being very nice to him and didn't send him. So some things I'm saying, I have gleaned from my brother, which is not a believer.

But still, there were truths about it that were very important. And one thing I remember that he told me, and he ended up sending me this picture while he was in boot camp, a picture that they took of him. And what they did is they went on a 24-hour run.

And then when they were all done with the run, you know what they did? They took their pictures. I mean, he was one miserable puppy, man. He has all of his gear on and everything.

Here he is, just eyes barely open and taking his picture. There was no smile on his face. You could tell he was so miserable.

And so he sent me the picture. And while I was talking to him once, he spoke of what the purpose of boot camp is. He says, you know what the whole purpose of boot camp was? And as a kid, I had no idea.

I said, I don't know what it's all about. And basically what he said, it's all about setting the person free from his individualism so that you come to a place and you work as a unit, that you are so dependent upon those other men and that they are so dependent upon you that whatever goes on, you will do it and that you are in such a place of obedience that your commanding officer can go to you and says, take that hill. And you say, sir, yes, sir.

And you do it because you have come to that place to be delivered from this individualism that says, I don't have to, I don't want to. Now imagine that you have this guy go in the military and war is raging. And the sergeant goes to a group of people and says, you take that city.

I don't know. You know, it's just, are you sure that we're supposed to? That looks pretty tough. And you know, it's kind of hot out today and I don't know if I want to go do that.

And now, are you sure? You know, I'd rather sit and have a latte this afternoon. A concept of Christianity in the church, that's the way the church functions. You know, you have some evangelistic event.

I don't know if I want to go and do it. I got to mow the lawn and this is going on and that's going on. Hell, we'll let them do it.

Not my calling anyway. You want to know why we're not taking the land? Because we're not acting like an army. We're not acting like a people of God that is to take a land.

We don't understand that the mission, not of an individual, not of a pastor or of a few people in the church, it is to be the mission, the ultimate mission of the church at large, period. It should be the mission of the church to conquer a city. It should be the very purpose of it says, we are not here just to have a nice church, to have a fortress mentality, to be just a nice group of people that have a nice fellowship and we can hug and kiss each other and just have a grand old time and go home and do our own thing.

We're here with divine purpose to take a land. And we failed. The church has failed across this country.

We're failing. We're failing because we are still intoxicated with our individualism. Intoxicated with it.

We are in this place where we think, it's all about me. It's all about my life. All about my wants.

All about my ambitions. All about money. All about ease.

Not understanding that all those things are going to be burned up with a fire and they're all going to be meaningless in the scheme of eternity. But what will matter is the souls that I fight for that I can lay as sheaves at his feet for the kingdom of God. And so he teaches me absolute surrender.

See, that's where he wants to bring us, to the place of absolute surrender. David understood this. He understood the situation as being a soldier that you rightly surrendered, that you are abandoning yourself to your commanding officer and you abandon yourself to him.

Whatever he asks you to do, you do. Look at what happened, even with the sin of King David. He goes and he sleeps with Bathsheba and then he takes Bathsheba's husband that was not a front line soldier.

As Joab go to Uriah and says, you go on the very front line. And he was a man that did not have the ability to stand that front line battle. And what did he say? Yes, sir.

Where's the yes sirs today in the church? It's gone. It's not there. It doesn't exist.

Because, you know, another dimension of what it was when David said he trains my hands for war, David learned what loyalty is. Loyalty is a cuss word in the church today. It's a cuss word, loyalty.

Who's loyal anymore? We're not loyal in marriages. How are we going to be loyal in churches? Do you hear what I'm saying? This is some serious stuff because how we act as a body of believers depends on what will happen out there, whether they will come to Christ or no. It depends on how we live in this world, our concept of Christianity, how we live out this Christian life.

Whether we're individualistic and we live our own life and say, I don't care if you're commander-in-chief and you tell me to go, I'm out for comfort. I live for me. I am the primary thing of my life.

It's all about me. And so he trains our hands for war, teaches us absolute surrender, teaches loyalty. But you want to know where loyalty comes from? I think loyalty comes from a place of trust.

The place that we can believe that our commander has the best for us. Why do you think the apostles went in that boat when Jesus said go in that boat? Because they've been with him enough to trust him. They've been with enough to see the miracles that he did.

They heard the words of life and they never saw an error in him. Not one mistake, not one wrong word, never a wrong reaction to people, never prayed for a person and not saw them healed. Do you hear what I'm saying? The absolute consistency of who Jesus was.

And then you're brought to this place where Jesus is getting a boat and because they had trust in him, even though they looked at it as maybe certain death, at least some great disaster, they would say I'll go because they came to trust him. Why are we disloyal in our Christianity? Because we don't trust. Does he really have my good intentions? Is he really a good God? Am I yet convinced he's a good God? Am I yet convinced that he is out for me, for my benefit, that when he calls me to the place to abandon my life to him, he's not out to rob me of good time.

He's out to give me life in ways I've never even imagined and that he wants to impart the life that he's given to me to others, that he wants me to be an agent in which the power of God can go forth to touch others. And so here's this place of trust. And so he teaches me this unquestioning obedience.

That's a hard one, isn't it? Very hard. We have a hard time with that. Unquestioning obedience.

It's just part of it is the human nature. Part of it is our fallenness. We all have this problem of questioning.

What little kids do it. Mom goes to the child and says, do this, why? So what do we do? We grow up and God says, do this, why? I don't think so. It's not going to make me happy from my standpoint of happiness.

But yet as a soldier, you know what we have to do is learn that unquestioning obedience. Knowing that he's good and willing to trust in him. Now, let me ask a question here.

And how many people were in the military or been in the military? So we do have some military men that could answer me this. What is the penalty if you're in a place of war and you have a soldier there and he goes AWOL and he runs away? What's the penalty? Death. That's serious stuff, isn't it? Why is it death? Why? Why do you think it's death? That's right.

Do you want everybody else to go? Because it's such a serious thing of the commitment of ourselves to others. Isn't that an interesting idea that the commitment in the military is so important that you are not given the right to go AWOL. If you do, it's going to cost you your life.

The very thing that you're trying to save in seeking to save your life, you're going to lose it. Isn't that an interesting biblical principle? Here's this God that calls us to this place where there is no room for insubordination, no room for going AWOL, no room for saying no to him, no room for saying I don't want to. But because we have a such an extreme individualistic idea in America, we don't think it's a big deal to go AWOL.

We don't think it's a big deal to say no to him. So what would happen to you is if you had a sergeant, if you're in boot camp, what happened if you went and said no to a sergeant? What would happen? I mean, any scenarios you can give me? Be some serious stuff, though. I mean, he wouldn't give you a rose or a pat on the back, would he? I mean, you'd be facing some serious issues because no is not something that's tolerated because they're trying to bring you to the place that you will obey unquestioningly and trust that there is the good intention of yourself and all involved in that.

Where's that in the church? He's calling us to that type of Christianity, that type of concept. And so, you know, it's so interesting. Here's this God that wants to teach the church militant how to war.

You know, that's an old term, church militant. We don't like that word. For obvious reasons, the word militant has been hijacked by Islam, but yet it's still a good word.

The militancy of Islam is through blowing themselves up and through pain and suffering. If they had nuclear weapons, guaranteed they'll use them, guaranteed. It is not a peaceful religion.

Anybody who tells you that is lying to you. It is not. The Qur'an does not teach that, nor do the imams and so on.

It's not its reality. But we are called to be a militant church, 100% the opposite, that we will lay our lives down that lives could be saved. The giving up of all that we have that they might know Him.

The giving up of ease, of comfort, of time that they might come to the place to know who this God is. What would happen is if we had that type of commitment today. Do you know the church in China is exploding? 30,000 are being saved a week.

30,000 a week. They say in 20 years, one third of China will be born again. And the majority of them all are spirit filled.

Exploding. They have no Bible schools. They don't have Christian bookstores.

They don't have Christian TV, thank God. They don't have the radio and all the things that we have that supposedly is supposed to make us so good. But the church is exploding in such a way because they've counted the cost and they have entered into this army, abandoning their lives, their goods, possessions, ease, reputations, everything that the kingdom of God might be established because they are so thoroughly convinced of who Jesus is that they trust Him.

Isn't that interesting? Are we that thoroughly convinced that Jesus is who He says He is? Are we that convinced that we would be willing to give up our possessions, our everything, to follow Him? And you know, to one, He might go, says, sell everything you have. To another, He'll say, you don't have to. But I will guarantee you what He brings all of us to.

He brings us all to the same place to take every possession we have and everything that we love and put it at the foot of the cross and say, take what is yours, give me what I am to have. And I will allow you to do it without complaint. He calls us all to that life.

It's a matter of what He allows us to have and what He deems is unfit for us to have. And so He teaches the church militant to war. And then He clothes them with spiritual armor.

He empowers them with spiritual might and courage. And He teaches them the strategies of war. You know what He does after He does all this? After He teaches them the strategies, He clothes them with armor, He imparts to them courage and strength to be able to accomplish the work.

You know what He does then? Always, absolutely, every single time. You know what He does then? He sends them to war. In America, we go to war when we have war.

But the reality in the kingdom of God and in the kingdom of hell is wars raging nonstop until finally Christ brings it all to an end. And so there's always battles that must be raged. And if we will not go, the battle will still rage.

It's just a matter of whether souls are going to be won or lost for the kingdom of heaven. It's going on. The battle is raging.

What are we going to do about it? He sends them into battle. First Peter, let me read this verse to you just quickly. The first chapter, the 13th verse, he says, Therefore, prepare your minds for actions.

Be self-control. Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Imagine what would happen if we set our minds to action in the morning when we got up.

I've been doing a little bit of reading of some Puritan authors. They had this one doctrine I think is very interesting. I'm just going to highlight it just for a moment.

It's what they call the doctrine of vocation. And what the doctrine of vocation is, it is the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers. But they call the doctrine of vocation to make it real practical for the person.

This is whatever God calls us to is the only thing that we are to do. So if God calls one person to be a preacher, he's called him to be a preacher. And if he's called another to be a blacksmith, he's to be a blacksmith.

If he's called another to be a tailor, he's to be a tailor. Another farmer, he's to be a farmer. The farmer's not going to have any less reward than the preacher if he's faithful to what God has called him to.

Because that is to be lived out just as much for the glory of God as the minister is to live out his life for the glory of God. So that means when that blacksmith goes into his shop and he begins his work, that he does it as unto God. That every blow of the hammer, every heating up of the metal, everything that he does is done for the glory of God with every desire to touch every person that walks through the door of his shop.

What would happen if the church had that mentality? If she got up in the morning and says, Dear God, train my hands for battle this day. Help me to prepare my mind. I'm going into the mission field in the workplace.

God, let me speak a word to somebody. Lord, help me to hear the opportunities and give anointing. Dear God, give me divine opportunity today.

And you're going as you go into the place and you can and you pray for them. There are some jobs that require all your thinking. There's other jobs where you don't have to think a whole lot.

And I'm not saying that in a demeaning manner. It's just it has the freedom that you can think a little bit more so you can dwell upon the things of God. But one way or the other, he wants us to have in mind the battle that we're called to and in the place that we're given is a mission field.

Here's this God that is so phenomenal. He's a God of transformation. And, you know, no soldier is made in a day, a week or a year.

It's a lifetime thing in the kingdom of God to make us more and more men and women of God. And so he takes this shepherd boy and turns him into a warrior and then turns him into a king. The process.

But are we allowing that process? Are we embracing that process that we might mature, that we might allow God to create in us a character that is for the glory of God, a character that can build his kingdom, a character that can be entrusted? Or am I out for my own glory, my own desire? Let me give us a story that I think is kind of interesting about the issue of the transformation of character that's so necessary in our life. Revival had come to the Aborigines in the Elko Islands and in Australia. The Aborigines, that's just another name for Indians.

So the Indians of Australia. And there's tremendous revival going on, but there's tremendous prejudice as well. So the whites are very prejudiced against the Aborigines.

The aspect of having mixed congregations, at least at this time, was unheard of. This was 1992. To have conferences together was unthinkable.

They were going to have this conference. It was going to be during Pentecost week and it was going to be a conference on revival. And they decided to ask some of the Aboriginal leaders to come and to speak at this conference, to speak about what God is doing among the Aborigines.

And so a handful of these men came at their own expense. They wouldn't even allow the conference leaders to pay for them and pay for their way. They came at their own expense and they preached.

And I'm just giving you the truth of this situation. At the end of the first service, and they preached the power of God and God was in the house and when it was all done, they gave an altar call. And then the leaders went and said, will you pray for us? And they said, well, we don't know how to pray for white people.

We never prayed for them before. And they said, please, will you pray for us? And they said, yes. And humbly, they prayed and the power was there and touching lives in great ways.

When the conference was over, they went to these leaders and they went to the Aboriginal leaders and he says, why is revival sweeping through your villages? And why is it passing by us? And these simple people made a statement so profound, said, because you are too proud, because you are too proud. You see, God's the transformer of our lives. He wants to take us from shepherd to warrior to king.

But you know what he doesn't want in that process? He doesn't want the growth of pride and self-will and our own ways of doing it. He wants absolutely the opposite, that as we go from shepherd to warrior to king in essence, that we grow more humble and more dependent. For David to say, you are my rock and to say that he was his only hope was a place of this man coming to greater humility in his life, not greater self-will and independence.

Now David brought out something here that is just dumbfounding, just doesn't make sense, not in the natural. So let me try and bring this into a understandable situation. David says, why do you care for me? Why do you think on me? Let's say you have this high school football team.

You can have some small football teams that are not very good football teams. So you have this small little town and they just have kids on it that are just mediocre and so they go for years and never win a game. And so here you have this team that is just absolutely no good.

And what does the coach do when they go out there to play? What does he do? Does he go to these kids and say, man, you guys are absolutely worthless. You're good for nothing. You've not run a game in three years.

You're not going to win this game. So I mean, just go out there and just lay down and let them walk over you. I mean, is that what you do? I mean, that's just ridiculous.

What does that coach do, man? He tries to bump them up and encourage them. And even when they make the mistakes, he's trying to encourage them and keep them going so that at least they'll go through the game and not give up and run away and cry their eyes out. Well, here in the midst of it, David is saying, you are my loving God.

You are the one who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. And then he says this thing that just doesn't make sense. He says, what is man that you care for him and the son of man that you think of him? Man is a breath.

His days are like a fleeting shadow. In essence, he's going, he says, you've called me to this war. I can't do it.

I can't do it. It's too great a thing for me. You called me to be king.

How can I be king of your people? How can I lead your people in the path of righteousness? How can I accomplish this? But here is the reality of God taking a man from shepherd. And as he was increasing the man, he was humbling the man. Because what he wanted was of this man of God not to become independent but to become dependent.

To come to the place to see his neediness and in that place of neediness to throw himself upon an all-sufficient, capable God that superabounds with the power to save. Do you understand what is going on here? This is so profound. This is not a natural thing.

No general would say this to his people. No king would say it to his generals. I mean, it's just would not happen, would not happen in the natural.

But Dave is not speaking of natural warfare. He's speaking of spiritual. And that which he even did in the natural, you know what he did? He understood that if God does not give us victory, we do not win.

How does that play out in our lives? We've looked at the issue of a perishing world out there. You have no ability to reach them. You cannot do it.

You cannot save them. You cannot heal them. You cannot change their lives.

You can't rescue that world. You can't change that world. And the sooner we get that in our minds and understand we can't do it, the better off we'll be.

Because it's not in the strength of man that can save. It's not in the strength of man that can heal or the wisdom of man. It's not in our abilities and programs.

We have in America been programmed to death because we trust in programs. We trust in abilities of man and wisdom of man and church structures and so on, rather than in the magnificent God that does not need all of our structures and plans and programs. We've trusted in those rather than trust in a magnificent God that can do a work beyond our imagination.

And that is exactly what pastor and I were saved in. The same identical thing where God showed up and put the same denominations in essence as he showed his ability to save in spite of man. But it comes to the place of seeing their neediness.

And you know what prayer comes down to be? When a church sees that they cannot save that world and their hearts are now breaking for that world and they see their inability to do it, then they go to an altar and they begin to plead with a God that can save. They begin to cry out to him, says, there's no other remedy. There's nothing else.

This battle is greater than we can face. And in that place of seeing their inability, they gaze upon a victorious king that has never yet lost a battle. And they find a triumphant king that comes to their rescue.

This is God's radical love made manifest through broken men and women. He does not need your abilities and talents. He doesn't need any of ours.

You know what he's looking for is that reckless abandonment, that total obedience, the throwing of ourselves upon this God that he might be exalted. Martin Luther, the founder of the great reformation of

the 1500s made this wonderful statement. This is just a beautiful statement.

He said, heaven and earth, all the emperors, kings and princes of the world could not find a fit dwelling place for God in any weak human soul that keeps his word. He willingly resides. All our wealth, all of our abilities does not impress him.

But yet when we see that our frailty and our neediness and we come before this God that is so tender to those who are broken and contrite before him, he comes and he makes his abode in them and shows himself powerful through them. Isn't that awesome? And so victory comes from the Lord. I think David was thoroughly convinced of this.

And so what did he say? He says, part your heavens, oh Lord, and come down. Doesn't that sound like the same thing that Isaiah went and says, it says, oh, that you would run the heavens and come down, that the mountains may tremble before you. Do we understand that the same thoughts and David that made him pen this Psalm is the same thoughts that brought Isaiah to the place to pen what he penned.

The same identical thing of seeing his humanity, his frailty, his inability to do it. But there's only one that can do it and all sufficient God that is unmovable, a God that is a rock that we can base our existence on, our life upon, our security, our eternity upon, a God that does not change, but yet is moved by the heart of men. What a phenomenal God.

A.W. Tozer made this point I think is so interesting. He said, religious work can be done by natural men without the gifts of the spirit, and they can be done well and skillfully. But work designed for eternity can only be done by the eternal spirit.

No work has eternity in it unless it is done by the spirit through gifts God has Himself implanted in the souls of redeemed men. What an interesting statement. We can do church without God.

How easy that is. We can go through the motions, but we cannot advance eternity, the kingdom of God without the power of God. There are churches out there that are building vast kingdoms that are the kingdom of men, not the kingdom of God.

You know what he wants? He wants his kingdom built, not upon the shoulders of men, but upon his glory and power. I want to close with some final thoughts and then we'll end. And I want to look at just a couple of brief points about means of victory.

How do I overcome? How do I overcome? Some of you in this room may have been running for a long time. You've been hurt, and so you've been in the hospital for a long time. Or you felt that you had to get away, and so you kind of just checked out into that refuge because life got difficult and you never wanted to go back out.

You didn't even want to look out the window and see the battle raging out there and fellow people suffering in the midst of it as they're trying to rescue others. You've come to a place of such comfort that you've not wanted to be involved. That you've even used the aspect of calling as an excuse, saying, well, that's not my ministry.

Well, it is your ministry. We better make sure that when we stand before God that we don't go and give him that excuse as well. It wasn't my ministry to rescue men because boy, that'll be a terrifying thing in that day having the response of God in that situation because I guarantee he will let you know it was your

responsibility.

It was your responsibility. And so what's the means of victory? Simply put, one of them is our faith. 1 Corinthians 16, 13 says, be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be men of courage, be strong.

We have run away for a long time. I love America. I'm not saying things anti-American.

I'm not saying things anti-American. I'm just saying things, the reality we face. Part of the thing is when you have a comfortable, prosperous nation until suffering comes to make it strong, we get very flabby and we get to be a people that run away from hardship because it gets difficult and we don't think life is about difficulty.

We think it's about happiness and prosperity. What are we told here by Paul? He says, be on your guard. Watch out, you're in battle.

They're gonna shoot at you. Bombs are gonna drop whether you like it or not. He says, be on your guard.

Then he says, stand firm in the faith, be men of courage, be strong. He's saying it's time to go to battle. It's time to be men and women of God.

It's time to pick up the sword and the shield. It's time to go to battle. It's time to count the cost.

And it's not about the issue of ease and comfort. It's about the issue of rescuing people. I don't know how many of you have ever led somebody to Christ or been tremendously influential in bringing a person to a place of salvation.

But when you do that, all the pain and difficulty and trial and time that it took to get that person there, was as nothing. Just like a mother can go through all the pain of birthing. And when she finally sets her face on that little child, the pain just kind of vanishes away.

Because now the treasure's in her arm. We have to understand that there's a prize that waits for us, which is the birthing of children. And there's pain in the process of it.

And anybody who tells us there's no pain in the process is lying. But the prize sits on the other side of that pain. And it's the issue that we go through that we might see children birth into the kingdom.

You know what would be such a travesty? That one day we stand before God and all that we find our excuses to be was just excuses of cowardice and selfishness. In this life and in this life alone, we are given this phenomenal privilege. And I want to share this with you.

And this thought is not coming from myself. It's coming actually from Mrs. William Booth. And or was it her daughter? Their daughter, I think it was.

I can't remember the quote off the top of my head. It's a phenomenal quote. I wish I had it here.

But basically what she said, she was on her deathbed, ready to pass on to be with the Lord. And she wanted to be with Jesus. But she said, the one thing I regret in my passing into the next life is that I will never ever again be able to companion with Jesus for the souls of men.

I will never be able to suffer with him for a dying world. What a statement. You see, when you cross through death's door, you'll never be able to suffer again for a dying soul.

Only in this life. Listen to this. Only in this life are you given that privilege.

Only in this life are you given that privilege. You reject that privilege and that will be a privilege you'll never be able to get back. Only in this life are you given that privilege.

Don't squander the privilege that he gives you to rescue a perishing life. What's another means of victory? It's through prevailing prayer. And I'm not going to take the time to go through it.

I want to come to a close. But it's the place where we become desperate for God. The place that drives us to our knees because we see a dying world and we see no other remedy, but that we cry out to God.

And then after we have been like Moses. You know what Moses did? Moses went and built this thing called the Tent of Meeting. And he built the Tent of Meeting and he put it outside the community of Israel, outside the camp of Israel.

And he would go out there and meet with God. And when God wanted to speak to him, the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of smoke by day would rise and go over the Tent of Meeting. And Moses would go walk into the tent.

And when Moses would walk into the tent and people would see the pillar of fire there, they would all stand in their doorways in respect of Moses going to speak with God. And he would speak with God face to face. You know what happened when Moses was done speaking with God face to face? You know what happened every single time? He sent him back into the middle of the children of Israel.

Same thing. He wants us face to face with him to place, to get the anointing, to get the power, to get the word that's living and vibrant and alive. But then when we are done getting it and speaking to him and touching him and being touched by him, then we go to a perishing world and we touch them with what we received in that secret place.

That is how he's designed it. That is the very model in which we are to do it. Apart from that secret place, our touching will have little effect.

But in that secret place, the word and the touch can have eternal value that can change lives. We overcome through the love of God. Galatians 5, 6 says, faith expressing itself through love.

Faith is most powerful when love is backing it. When I have so fallen in love with this God, I found him so phenomenal that he becomes easy to trust. Do you know that? The more you love him, the easier he is to trust.

He's trustworthy, period. Whether a person loves him or not. And a person can have faith in him, just like Corinthians says, without loving him.

But I'll tell you, it sure is easy. The more we love him, the easier it is to trust him. We overcome when we come to this place where we love him so much and he says, go into the midst of that battle and we say, I trust you now, God, because I have found you to be good.

Do you know God good? Leave aside the cliché that we can say in services, God is so good. Oh, yes. And we have the response to it.

Leave that aside. Are you convinced that he's good? Are you convinced he's been good to you in the midst of your foolishness and sin in the midst of your journey that you've been on? And has he been good to you or has it that you've not understood his goodness? Because I guarantee you he is good and I guarantee you he's being good to us. The problem we often have is we do not understand what goodness is.

We don't understand his expression from God. But I guarantee you everything he does is good because he has our eternal well-being in mind with everything that goes on. And the more I understand his goodness and I walk in that love, the easier it is to trust him.

So when he says, go, I say, yes, Lord. Yes, Lord, whatever you ask. I believe that you care for me.

And I'll close with this is what is a means of victory? And I want to touch on this because I am thoroughly 100% Pentecostal. I was saved on a Saturday in a park, I dealt drugs. On Sunday night, I hitchhiked out to this Jesus Freak Church that was in revival.

I was raised Catholic. I knew nothing of God at all. I didn't know anything at all.

And I go in there, they give an altar call. I go up there and a guy comes up to me to pray with me. And I told him what happened the day before.

He says, you're saved. Let's pray for you for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I said, sure.

I don't know whatever that is. Praisery, wham, instantly filled. And so there's victory in the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Now, the question is, are you desperate for it? Here's this gift that he offers you, this holy, magnificent God that has this gift. And he says, I will give it to you. And you know what people do? I'm just saying this, being honest, that when they know about the baptism of the Holy Ghost and they haven't received it, so many say, no, I don't want it.

I don't need it. As if we were smarter than God, as if he offered us this gift and it was not an important thing, not a big thing. Do you know what that is? Let's go back to the issue of insubordination, isn't it? It becomes a form of rebellion, says, I don't need that.

I don't want that. And so the real problem is not the gift that God gives. The problem is no desperation or heart that would seek it.

And so there's victory for you in ways you've not understood through that gift, as he holds out his hand, wanting you to have it if you will but seek it. The question is, what will you do? Will you seek it? Will you desire it? Will you seek that victory he offers? That's what you're looking for.

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