

The Super Bowl

by Jack Hyles

To win the battles of life, we must raise the standard of the Holy Spirit and follow the fruit of the Spirit.

Duration: 57:19

Scripture: Galatians 5:16

Topics: "Super Bowl"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about the moment of conversion when a person realizes their sinfulness and accepts Jesus as their savior. He emphasizes that this moment marks the beginning of a battle between the old nature and the new nature within the believer. The preacher shares a personal anecdote about a conflict he had with a woman over a belt, highlighting the internal struggle between selfishness and love. He concludes by urging believers to win the battle within themselves so that they can effectively fight the battles in the world.

Transcript

When the ancient countries, or countries in the time of Isaiah 59, in the writing of the Bible, would fight a battle, they would take with them, and before them, a standard to battle. This standard would be much like, oh, you've seen the Democratic and Republican conventions on television, and you've seen the banner held up, banner from Illinois, banner from Indiana, where the delegation from Massachusetts and so forth is located, and as an army would pursue in battle, the army would have a standard. Now, this standard was used on which to write the victories that the army had won in previous battles.

Now, you've watched football teams where the helmet was used for a star every time the player would have an unusually good game or make a good play. A fellow as a defensive halfback, for example, every time he intercepts a pass, maybe they'll put a star on his helmet, and that helmet proclaims to all those who see him play that he has intercepted a pass, or as many passes, as he has stars. Now, when a battle, they'd write the battle, the name of the battle, upon the standard, and as they would go into the next battle, they would raise the standard high.

You've heard the song, Raise the Standard High for the Lord, and it raised the standard high. Now, in Isaiah 59, verse 19, it says that when the enemy comes in like a flood, when the battle gets the roughest, that God has a standard for us to raise high, and that standard is the Holy Spirit. Again, I'll read the paraphrasing.

The Spirit of the Lord shall be lifted up as a standard. Now, why would the Spirit of the Lord be our standard? Simply this, it is the Spirit of the Lord who's won every victory that we've ever won. It's His battle, and so because we win all the battles in the Lord's work through His Spirit and the energy of His Spirit, that means that when we go to battle, we raise the standard high, and that standard is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God gives us victory in our battles.

Now, there are three battles the Christian fights, and here's the outline tonight. First, the battle within us. Second, the battle among us.

And third, the battle without us. There are three battles you have to fight. A battle that is going on within you.

Now, that battle you have to fight until you die. The second battle is the battle that goes on among us. I mean, each other.

We fight each other. We fuss with each other. We can't get along, young people, with each other.

We have problems with among ourselves, and so we have that kind of battle to fight. And then, let's take Dr. Billings, for example, and Dr. Billings and I are fellowshiping together, and through the years, though I do not think we've ever had a crossword between us, I don't think we have. Now, we may have a time or two disagreed on something, but I do not think we've ever had a moment of tension between us in these years.

But if we know each other and serve together long enough, we're going to have a few differences along the trail. And so, now, here's a battle. I'll have some battles within myself.

I must fight the battle within myself. Now then, we may have sometimes some feud between us. Husbands and wives have those feuds.

Deacons have those feuds. People in departments have those feuds. Misunderstandings and unkind words, and sometimes even a few rude things.

Boy back here and the girl sit up. The girl's got her white stuff in her hair. Sit up and listen to me.

Yeah, you. That's right. And you listen to what I've got to say, or we're going to have some battles between you and me tonight.

And I don't think I plan to lose. So, now then, there's the battle among us. God's people sometimes don't get along with each other.

God's people sometimes fuss and feud one with the other. I can recall in Texas one time being called to a house, and one of my ladies, I got to the house, knocked on the door. One of my ladies, I mean a fine lady.

I mean, she was a Sunday school teacher. In our Sunday school, she and another lady in our church had gotten in a fuss, and they actually had gotten in a fight. When I got there, the bigger lady, she was, Dr. Rice would put it this way, she was well upholstered.

And she was the bigger lady. She had the other lady, she was down over her, pulling her hair. I mean, she had a handful of hair in her hand, pulling it out.

And I said, I said, Mrs. Elton, get off of that lady. And I said, she was a fatter one, it was on top. But anyway, these weren't mean ladies.

These were nice ladies. They both worked in our church, and they were Sunday morning and Sunday night and Wednesday night people. Actually had a fight.

I mean, fingernail clawing, hair pulling, kicking, high heel shoe swinging, fight. An old-fashioned brawl, if you please. And now we're going to have those.

We're just going to have them. That's all there is to it. Christians are going to have their battles among themselves.

Now, the third battle that I'll have to fight, and Dr. Billings and I'll have to fight, not only a battle within me and among us, but the battle without us. The enemies from without, who want to fight us and want to criticize us and slander us and hurt the work and keep the school from going well and keep the church from going well. Now, how can we win these battles? Only one way, and that is the standard of the Holy Spirit.

I don't care what the battle is. If the battle is on the inside with some temptation in your own heart, you have to raise the Holy Spirit high. He'll have to give you the victory.

Or if the battle is between you and some other Christian person, you can't get along with each other, the Holy Spirit's going to have to give you the victory. Or if the battle is between you and some unsaved person, the Holy Spirit's going to have to give you the victory. Now, the Super Bowl is the fight that goes on within us.

Let me read it for you. I'll ask you not to turn to it because of time. Let me read it for you, over in James chapter 4, this verse.

From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Now, it says here, from whence come wars and fighting among you? In the Greek it says, from whence cometh wars and fighting within you? Now, the first battle is the battle within. And by the way, it's the biggest battle and the secret to all other battles. If you win the battle, listen to me, if you win the battle within you, you'll win the battle among us.

If you win the battle within you, you'll win the battle from those who are without. The secret to the Christian life is right in here. That battle that goes on in here.

At the moment that you get converted, a person walks down this aisle, he kneels here at this altar, and he realizes he's a sinner. He realizes he's lost. He realizes that Jesus died on the cross as his penalty for sin and payment for sin.

And he says, I know I'm a sinner, and I receive Christ, and I mean it. At that moment, Christ comes in to live. But that moment, a war within him begins.

And that war is the new nature and the old nature. The nature that was born years ago when your mother gave birth to your physical body, and the nature that was born on your knees at the altar, and that moment, a battle starts. A war begins.

Fighting, warring within us. And that's why we have these tremendous battles on the inside. Now, the sad thing is this.

Satan doesn't want you to remember that enemy. Satan wants you to forget about that enemy. Satan does not want you to reckon the fact that there's still an old nature.

And if he can get you to think, well, I've got it made now. Praise the Lord, I'm a new creature in Christ. But you forget about the old nature.

He'll step up on the hind side of you and clobber you. And before you know it, you've lost the battle. Why? There's a war on the inside.

It's a strange thing. You get converted, and oh, there's a new world. My, my, my, you never dreamed you'd be what you are.

And all of a sudden, the old black book, the Bible, used to be a book carried by fanatics. And all of a sudden, you love to read the Bible. And you glean his pages.

And the Bible is a new book. And your chains and the church. You used to hate the church.

You used to drive by and say, What do those folks do down at the church all the time? And just paying that preacher. By the way, it takes 32 people, 32 men, to carry off all the money I make. You may notice that.

They come down here and carry off all the money I make. And they just pay that preacher. He's the money grabber.

I haven't been grabbing too much of it lately. But he's the money grabber. Pay the preacher.

And all of a sudden, you like the guy. You like the preacher. I want to ask you this.

I want to ask you to raise your hand. It might make me commit suicide. But it'd surprise you, probably, if you knew how many folks in this church, who love me dearly now, hated me the first time they ever came to this church.

Don't say, Huh? Shut up. I hate you still. But it might surprise you as to how many people.

Why? Well, all of a sudden, you come and you hear the message. And God speaks to your heart. And you come down here and you get saved.

And all of a sudden, you like the guy. And you like the church. And everything's all right.

You're a new preacher. And you go out of work the next morning. And you don't curse like you did.

And you don't drink. Don't stop at the tavern. All the way home from work the next day.

And you start tithing. You never thought you would tithe. You never thought you'd put a dollar in the collection plate.

And all of a sudden, you start giving a tenth of your income to God. You're a new preacher. But then one day.

One day. You're driving a nail. And you hit the wrong nail.

The thumbnail is the one you hit. And you let out what would be a big, long, a bunch of cursed words. Dirty.

Brick. Black. Alpaca.

Lumber. Slattery. A blotch.

A brotch. And before. Oh.

You say. Oh. I didn't know.

I thought that was over. I got saved. I haven't said a word like that since I got saved.

And. Oh. My.

Oh. What's happened to me. What's happened.

And all of a sudden. Maybe. Maybe.

Maybe. Somebody gets a little mad at your work. And you say.

Oh. Shut up. And.

Oh. You say. I didn't know I'd ever do that again.

Yes. You'll do it again. Yeah.

You'll do it again. You'll get mad again. You'll lose your temper again.

You'll get covetous again. You'll slide back into some of the old habits again. Now.

The thing you've got to realize. You're not lost. Because you did that.

There's a war going on. There's a battle going on. There's a constant warfare.

The new man says do good. The old man says do bad. The new man says go to church.

The old man says stay home. The new man says give a tithe. The old man says don't give a tithe.

The new man says read the Bible. The old man says read a dirty, dirty magazine. The new man says live for God.

The old man says live for the devil. The new man says follow the Spirit of God. The old man says don't do that.

The new man says give all you've got to God. The old man says you're a fanatic. And that constant warfare all the time is going on.

Listen. There's not a person in this room tonight who is saved. Who doesn't have that battle going on right now.

It's always there. How can you win it? You've got to win it by raising the standard of the Holy Spirit. Now turn, please, to Galatians, Chapter 5. I want you to follow me here very carefully in Galatians, Chapter 5.

We're going to have a football game, or a Super Bowl, and the teams are the flesh versus the spirit.

One team is the flesh, and now we introduce the players on the flesh team. Look at verse 16 of Galatians, Chapter 5. This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth, and that word lusteth means fighteth, or wareth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

And these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the spirit, ye are not under the law. Now follow me.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness. Now I'm reading off the players on the flesh team, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, endings, murders, drunkenness, revelings. Now then, we have a battle going on, and here's one team down here on this end of the field, and this is called the flesh team.

And the players, I've just read off. Now on this end of the field we have another team to play, to fight, and that is the spirit. And let's see the players of the spirit in verse 22.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Now there you have the players on the spirit team. Now we have a battle going on.

We have the flesh team over here, we have the spirit team over here. Now if you look very carefully, you'll find that every member of the flesh team has a direct opposite on the spirit's team. For example, look at verse 20, hatred, and down to verse 22, love.

In verse 20, strife, down to verse 22, peace. Look down to verse 21, drunkenness, down to verse 23, temperance. Look at revelings, and down to verse 22, goodness.

Now let me illustrate. I am, I know football, I'm not a great football player, never was, but I know football. And let's see, Doc, let you and I, I'm going to win this game, you wait and see.

You're tackled, you're the right tackle on the team, and I'm the left tackle on our team, okay? Ready? Man alive. He doesn't look so bad, but his breath smells terrible. All right? Okay, thank you.

Now then, he and I are going to line up against each other all the time. And now the entire game, what's my job? Block him out. I'm the offensive, he's offensive, his breath.

I'm the offensive tackle, and I'm to block him out. My job is to keep him out. Now we're having a big game, but that big game is composed of eleven little games.

Follow me, young people. Hey! Now follow me. As long as we can win eleven little games, we'll win the big game.

Now it is not the big game, we must win. I must defeat my opponent. Now let's just say with a fist, you're on my team, but Brother Helton is on Dr. Billings' team.

Where are you, fella? And okay, so what happens? That means you've got to block him out. And if you can block him out, and I can block him out, if you can block him this way and I'll block Billings this way, then as Colston waddles through with the ball, then he can, we'll have to block a real wide path, make a big hole, he'll come through, we can win the game. Why? Because you win against your player, I win against my player.

Now there's a great Super Bowl going on. Where is it being fought? In your heart. What? Love versus hate.

See? It's how I'm going to live a Christian life. You've got to break it down at each player. Listen, any football team that wins or has a good year, even plays a decent football game, is going to have a backfield coach, an offensive backfield coach, a quarterback coach, an offensive end coach, the blocking of the inside lineman, offensive coach, a defensive backfield coach, a defensive line coach, and each player is fighting against the other player.

And that means that each has to win its own battle. Now that is the Super Bowl. Now look down, please, if you would, to verse 22 of Galatians chapter 5. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

Now those are qualities within. That's the fight within. That's the team members that fight the battle within.

Long-suffering gentleness, goodness, that's our relationship with people without. That's to prevent the wars among us. And then faith, meekness, temperance, that's with God.

That's to win the battle against those who fight without us. Now you have nine players and three players fight each battle. The love, joy, peace, there's a war on the inside of me.

I must fight it with love and joy and peace. There's a war going on between us. How must I fight that? With long-suffering gentleness and goodness.

But there's a war going on with the world. How must I fight that? With faith in God and meekness and temperance. You see, so each of these three battles, the war within me, the war within us, the war among us, and the war without us has its own particular players who play in this Super Bowl game.

Now, here's a great, a great truth. And that truth is this. We must, we must have all of these qualities in the energy of the Holy Spirit.

Now we Baptists don't say much about the Holy Spirit, but there's no way in the world you can win this battle on the inside unless you have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has got to give you the victory. Raise the standard high, even the Holy Spirit.

He is our standard. Oh, I don't want to hate. I don't want to hate.

I want to have love in my heart toward all men. But you know something inside of me wants to hate. It wants to get mad.

It wants to punch somebody in the nose. I was down in West Virginia this week. Flew to Cincinnati.

My plane was canceled because of bad weather and I had to hang around the Cincinnati airport for about a month or two it seemed like. And then got a plane out of Cincinnati and flew into Charleston and it was bad weather. And the fellow who was supposed to meet me thought I was coming in at 6.01 and he was at the airport and I didn't know what he looked like and he hadn't seen me in a long time and he'd forgotten what I looked like.

And so he didn't, he was there and I was there and neither one of us knew the other. I found out later we'd walked by, we'd met each other. I'd actually spoken one time and he didn't know it was me and I didn't know it was him.

And I stayed around the airport and finally rented a car and got to the car and drove it across those mountains and it was snowing and it was cold and you could hardly see. And I made an awful mistake, the mistake of my life. Oh, the horrible, sinful thing that I did.

I chose a Ford. And naturally everything went wrong with the Ford. And so I got the car and it started snowing and turn the windshield wipers on and the one over here on the other side where the passenger would sit, if there was a passenger there, it worked beautifully.

And that only left one, it wasn't working. And it worked right down, about that much at the bottom. And I drove for almost two hours in a snowstorm looking through that little hole at the bottom.

And I'd stick my head out the window for a while and get my eyes and hair and head full of snow, more head than hair, and get it full of snow. Then I'd push the squirter, I didn't think about the squirter, push the squirter and squirted water up there. It was just freezing and the water froze and I had to get a, so I tried to turn the defrost on, but the heater wouldn't work.

And it was just blowing cold air. And if I'd have seen Henry Ford, I'd have killed him. I'd have killed him.

And so I was paying for that thing. I was renting that stupid car. God pity you folks that are away from God and drive Fords.

But I finally got up and finally got to the church and worn out and I couldn't see through the windshield and my eyes were hurting and I had a headache. And I went in and I preached. When I got through preaching, I thought, boy, I'll be glad to get home and get a home, a motel room, that is home, and get a good nice rest and get out of that Ford.

And so I went out and I turned on the starter and it went, hmm. And turned on again and it went, hmm. And turned on again and it went, hmm.

And there I was. Everybody was gone. And so there I sat out in the hill to West Virginia and had a, I was paying for that.

And I sat there and finally found a fellow that put, get a jumper and start the car off his battery. And so I got back to my room and finally had a halfway decent hour. And then I decided to catch an airplane to the airport and was going to drive the Ford to the airport.

And it wouldn't start the morning and then I was going to go to the airport and the plane was about there. And so finally I got the thing started and went off into the airport, up in the hills of outside Beckley, little old dump of an airport. Never saw anything like it in your life.

I was the first customer that had since 1933. And I, I went in the airport, nobody there. And I, I, I started to call ahead to check in the car.

Pardon me. I, I, I call it car for want of a better word and check it in. And I was, I was looking forward to checking in.

Nope. And so I got there and no office, no place that hurts. We're in a car.

And I, I, so I finally, I said, Hey, Hey. And a fellow, a fellow walked out and he was a custodian, I guess. He hadn't been doing his job and it was a dirty place.

And, and I had to call the Sunday school left from the end and they didn't have a telephone in the inside of the airport. Had to go outside and it was seven degrees. And I was standing outside, seven degrees, calling the Sunday school left from the end, a long distance.

And then finally I said, where do you turn the car in? He said, later in that office down there. Went down the hall, walked in. There was a little gal sitting in there.

She was a secretary. And she, she worked for Hertz on the side whenever they had a car. Hadn't had a car turned in there in years.

And so she pulled out the forms, blew the dust off the forms. And she said, which one I'll fill out first? And I said, lady, I know I've done this before. You fill out that one first.

And then she couldn't do it. And she called down the main office downtown and tried to figure it out. And, and finally got the car turned in.

And I said, you better, better check that car. I said, that car's in bad shape. Nothing works right.

And so then I went out to check in at the, at the gate. I mean, at the counter, get my ticket. And nobody was there.

And so I said, buzz if you want service. I buzzed. Guess who came? Same little girl came out that back office back there.

She came up there and she said, can I help you? And I said, I've seen you somewhere before. Yeah, just a minute ago, back there. And I said, I want to catch the plane.

And she looked at the ticket. Like she'd never seen a ticket before in her life. And now I tell you that there was a war going on inside of me.

I wanted to get a gun and join that fellow on top of that Howard Johnson motel down there in New Orleans. I wanted to see blood. I mean, I wanted to kill somebody.

I got the Bob Jones thing. He used to say, somebody said, did you ever want to divorce your wife? He said, no. I've wanted to choke her to death many times, but never wanted to divorce her.

And I want to, now, you say, preacher, you mean you wanted to fight? Yes, I wanted to fight. But would you want to fight? I want to burn down a whole Ford Motor Company. That's what I wanted to burn down.

Now, how's a fellow going to win a war like that? How are you going to keep from hating? You're going to have to walk in the spirit and you're going to have to say, now, now spirit of God, give me victory. There's a battle on the inside. Hatred fights love and dirty thoughts fight clean thoughts.

And this constant warfare going on all the time. Listen to me. Most Christians don't know a thing about the person of the Holy Spirit.

We've never learned yet to reckon his presence. And we've never learned yet to speak to him and talk to him and know him and love him and walk in him. The Bible says, walk in the spirit.

You'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh. That war on the inside. Let me ask you a question tonight.

Are you, you got a battle going on on the inside? Huh? Is there a battle on the inside going on? Covetousness? And this, maybe somebody says, I came to college and I, and I'm, I'm, I'm by faith and I can't pay my bill and I can't understand it. And I just can't figure it out. And discouragement sets in.

Walk in the spirit and you'll be encouraged. Just yield yourself to the Holy Spirit. I think so often of that beautiful story over there in the 24th.

Is it a Genesis where Abraham sent his servant Eliezer to the far country to get a bride for Isaac. And he got Rebekah and his Eliezer represents the Holy Spirit. And he came back and he brought that, that bride to Isaac and, and the Holy, that Eliezer said, now you follow me.

I'm sure he must've said, you stay close to me. You don't know the way. And we'll be up on top of mountains sometimes and sometimes down the lowest of valleys, but you follow me.

Oh my dear beloved friend, you're not going to win this war on the inside. This war to hate, this war to envy, this war to lust, this war to be jealous, this war to be venticative, this war to fight back, this war that that's full of covetousness and this war that's full of dirty thoughts and the war that goes on on the inside. You've got to get the place where you get up in the morning and say, Oh spirit of God, give me the victory today.

When the flow and the enemy comes in like a flood tide, raise the standard high, even the Holy Spirit of God, lean on him, trust him, follow him, obey him, talk to him, walk with him, walk in the spirit. But there's a second, second battle going on and that's the battle among us. Now let me say this, Doc, if you and I can win the battle within us, then we can win the battle among us.

When we cannot, if we do not win the battle within us, now how do you win the battle within us? It's when each player fights against the other player. And as each player wins his own individual battle, then we win, we win the game. Now if we can win the battle within us, then we can win the battle among us.

But so often we let the battle, we lose the battle within us. Let's suppose, let's suppose for example, well I think, I'm sure you've heard me tell this, but maybe not. Anyway, when I was a college student, just the age some of you preachers here, I was a college student.

I worked at JCPenney Company and I made \$20 a week. And that was the way I paid my way through college. And oh, I worked hard.

I pastored a little country church, paid me \$7.50 a week, worked 40 hours a week at JCPenney Company and took 15 hours in college. And I was tired, didn't get but two or three or four hours sleep a night and had to stay up and study. And I was taking Greek, oh brother.

And Greek, oh my, any college that teach Greek is not right with God. And so I was taking Greek and oh my, and those words and the sentences and what do you call it when you conjugate a verb, conjugate a verb? Time and time again I'd say, oh you dirty conjugation, you. But I'd conjugate it and I'd be up at two o'clock in the morning trying to conjugate a verb.

And I'd get, and about two o'clock in the morning, I'd take in Spanish and the Spanish and the Greek all got mumbled up. And I'd say, avlo, avles, avle, avlo, avles, avle, avlamos, avles, avlein, and oh, I'll tell you what, I've leaned that book down many a time, wanted to quit. And about two or three o'clock in the morning, and so I'd work so hard.

And it was final examination week. And I was going to preach at a supply out in the country, at a little church, I forgot the name of the church, but it was a little supply out in the country the next Sunday. And it was Saturday afternoon late and I didn't have any sermons for the next day and I had to study for exams and I had to, I had, I was tired and worn out and I hadn't had any sleep.

And the war within me was on a pretty low ebb at the time. And so a lady came in about 15 minutes before quitting time and she said, my husband's birthday is tomorrow. I want to buy him a new belt.

And I said, well, man, we have belts. We have one belt cost \$1.79. We have another one that cost \$2.98. She said, but I wanted one that cost \$5. Well, I said, lady, we don't have any that cost \$5.

I said, all we have is one for \$1.79, one that cost \$2.98. She said, but I wanted a \$5 belt. I said, there's a Flusi store down the street. I said, they've got some \$5 belts down there, but I said, we ain't got no \$5 belts here.

She said, but I want to buy a belt at J.C. Penny Company and I want a \$5 belt. Help the brother have a seat back there, please. Find a seat.

Everybody has to sit down. And so I said, dear lady, I said, all we have is \$2.98 and \$1.79. And she got a little mad and I was wanting to get mad anyway. I'd been wanting to see blood all week.

And so she said, well, I want a \$5 belt. And I said, sister, if you want to fork over five bucks, that \$1.79 belt, you just stick it out and see if I won't take it. You think maybe the battle had been lost on the inside? And she turned in her huff and said, well.

And I said, well. I did it in love, of course. And she walked away.

I went home, studied all night, got me a couple of sermons, Vespers that Spurgeon had written, and got me a couple of sermons. And the next morning I walked to preach in this little church and looked over and, would you like to know who was playing the piano? Huh? You guessed it the first time. And I didn't really know at first.

And I thought, now, where have I seen that lady before? And the piano wasn't any farther than six feet away over here, a little bit of the auditorium, didn't have but a hundred folks. And I thought, where is that lady? And during the first song, she was playing along there, and she said, you got any \$5 belt? I thought, oh, my soul, my soul, my soul. And all morning, I preached to this side over here.

I just preached this. I never looked at that lady. Oh, my, my.

You say, Preacher, you got the same, yeah, I got the same belt as you have. Yeah. Right.

Same belt as you have. Yeah. I was in a hurry the other day.

I had to be here for an appointment, and I forgot something, and I had a wedding. And I forgot a bow tie. And I got halfway up here and had on a tie like this, not quite like this, but the Hilton gave me this for Christmas, it's for our Highlanders out of the school.

But I had on that tie, and I didn't have a bow tie, and I had a wedding, had to get back home, and I got behind the lady driver. God pity a fellow who ever gets behind the lady driver. And she drove on her half the road, but her half was right in the middle of the road.

And so I tried to pass on this side, and she'd weave over here on this side. And so I passed on this side, she'd weave over here on this side. And so when I passed by her, I went, yeah, I have the same belt as you have.

I have the same temptation as you have. We all have the same battle. Now, what can we do? One year, the Super Bowl game was, no, not Super Bowl, it was, oh, the Cotton Bowl game, and Texas was playing in the Cotton Bowl.

And so I sat down in front of the television set, it was, no, it was on, it was New Year's Eve, and I wanted to see the Cotton Bowl game and watch Texas play. And so I, right within just a few minutes before New Year's Eve, or New Year's, the day before New Year's, whatever that is, was in, this television set broke, and I couldn't see the Texas game. And so I called the television company right quick, and the repairman, I said, hey, get out here quickly.

And he said, okay, and he came, I said, boy, it's an emergency, it's an emergency. He said, what is it? I said, Texas plays tomorrow, and I got to see it. He said, man, that is an emergency.

And he came out, and he took the set, and he said, I'll bring it back on New Year's morning. And he said, it's going to be open a couple hours on New Year's morning. And so he came back and put it in the television, in the den, and I sat down to watch Texas.

And do you know what? In the opening pre-game program, the thing went out. I mean, it went out. I mean, it went black.

I mean, they didn't, wouldn't talk, and they wouldn't let me see them. And, and, and there I was looking, and I had a television set with ears but couldn't hear, and a voice and couldn't talk. And the game was about to start, and I picked up the phone, and I said, man, you've got to come out and get this thing.

He said, this is a holiday, I can't come out on a holiday. I said, yes, you are. I'm coming down there.

And so I went down there, and when I got there, he wouldn't see me. He was back in the back. And he was scared of me.

I mean, after all, I'm a frightful looking creature. And he wouldn't see me. And I walked back in the back, and I said, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. I said, if you don't mind, could I take you out to eat lunch? I'd like to, I'll miss the game, take you out to eat lunch. And he said, mister, he said, aren't you Reverend Hiles? I said, yes, I am.

And I said, I'll be honest with you. I wanted to watch that game more than I think, I want to do anything in the whole world today. But I said, I shouldn't want to watch the game more than I want to be nice to you.

And you know that man from that day to this, he's been one of my fans. And he didn't come to church here, and never did. But he likes me, and he tells folks about that.

You know why? Because the battle was there. How do you win it? In the power of the Spirit. Brother, when you've got a battle, you want to watch the cotton ball game, you can't watch it.

If you can make that, you can make it. I mean, that's it. You've got it made.

Now, there's that constant warfare. Among us, you get saved. And you say, boy, you come in this church, and you get saved.

Boy, what a place. That preacher, he's perfect. Boy, I bet that preacher never does anything wrong in the whole world.

And that billing, what a man. Boy, what a man. He gets up and talks about an octopus Texan, and boy, that guy, I bet never does anything wrong.

And that Hilton, boy, what a guy he is. Nobody can pray like that Hilton can pray. And John Colston, boy, that must be the nicest guy on the face here.

And that live wire over there, everything he's got on his charge, you know what? Live wire, vineyard. Boy, this is a wonderful church. Hey, this is a great church.

Everybody's perfect. Nobody does anything wrong. Here's a church where everybody loves each other.

And all of a sudden, one day, the strangest thing happens. You get in a little huddle, and somebody begins to talk about Dr. Billings. And you thought, oh my, I thought he was perfect.

And pretty soon, the preacher sees you on the street and doesn't recognize you and doesn't speak to you. And you say, oh my. And after a while, with a fisk, does something to hurt your feelings.

He didn't choose you to be a Sunday school teacher. And Brother Vineyard, he's busy trying to get a bunch of bus kids, and he runs over you and doesn't even stop to pick you up. And then all of a sudden, the sad truth comes out.

First Baptist Church is composed of human beings just like every other church is. And if you don't watch out, he'll throw you in. Because there's going to be some day when I'm going to disappoint you.

And listen, Dr. Billings is the finest educator in America, but he's going to make some mistakes. And some days, you're going to be disappointed in him. And some days, you're going to be disappointed in Max Hilton.

Now listen to me. If you don't watch it, you'll lose that war among us. That war among us.

And that's why Paul said, you need to have long-suffering, gentleness, goodness. Be patient with Dr. Billings. The Bible says comfort the feeble-minded.

And be patient with Dr. Billings. Be patient. I'm not going to always do what you think I ought to do.

I was thinking, in a church like this, we're so interwoven with each other. Let me just read with you for a minute. Coach Price is a deacon.

The deacons are over Dr. Billings. Dr. Billings is the head of the school set up, so he's over Coach Price. So if Dr. Billings gets on Coach Price, all Coach Price has to do is go to deacon's meeting and make a motion to cut his salary some.

Now you think about that. He's his own grandpa. Think about that now.

Mr. Bartley teaches mathematics at the high school. He's on the deacon board. So Mr. Bartley, on the deacon board, voted whether or not you got a raise this year.

By the way, that's why you didn't get one. And he voted on that. And he votes on whether you stay or leave.

And you go out and you decide whether he stays or leaves. I hired Dr. Billings. And I don't like to say I'm his boss, but if you want to be real harsh about it and crude, I'm his boss.

So what happens? Cindy goes to school. They're dressed three quarters of an inch too short one day, and she can't even go to class. He's holding my girl hostage in his office, you see.

Now what I'm trying to say, don't you see it? He has power over my children and I have power over him. Do you know that most schools, that parents of the students don't have to look to the teachers of their pupils? It's amazing why you kids come to church. You got to, here's a teacher.

Ms. Johnson, you up here? Who's up here? Our teacher, school teacher. Yeah, yeah, Ms. Trader, Mrs. Trader is a school teacher. She also runs an orphanage at her house, and she's a school teacher.

And what happens? She gets up here and she sings, and, and, Flannery, she said, that'll be three demerits, bud! And you got to sit out there and look at her all during the service on Sunday morning and Sunday night. Most students get a reprieve from their school teachers over the weekend. You got to look at yours and hear them sing.

You see, listen, we have to really fight the battle of wars among us, or we'll have, or we won't have the blessing of God upon this church. We're so interwoven here. We see each other all the time.

I mean, we're together Monday and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. We're always together. That means we constantly have to say, Spirit of God, don't let me be easily offended if one of the teachers is going to have a bad day sometime.

Did you know that a teacher is going to someday have a bad day and make a mistake on your children? And you're going to have to say, Spirit of God, don't let me hold any bitterness about that. And as you know, teacher, or Dr. Billings, the other day, the other night I talked on don't defend your child against authority and don't go to authority complaining about your child. And before we got to the office, Dr. Billings was shaking his head and said, oh my, the preacher, he said, somebody's going to think you were preaching right to them tonight.

He said somebody was at the office this afternoon and they were in the service tonight. Good people. But I didn't know a thing about it.

The dear Holy Spirit just led me to take care of the need and the problem and didn't know a thing about it. By the way, if I had known something about it, I would have gone ahead anyway. But I didn't know a thing about it.

You see, we're interwoven here. We, here's the fellow that gets up and says, okay, Barber, number 421, it ain't a thing. And you sit out there and say, well, you hypocrite, you mistreated my daughter.

You gave my daughter 18 demerits last year and she's the best kid we got in our whole family. Yeah, I know, but those others are corks. You ought to see them.

And we are interwoven. We have got to watch it all the time. Look, we've got to say, I'm not going to be offended.

I'm not going to get mad. I'm not going to have hurt feelings. I'm not going to hold ill will.

I'm not going to have the war. You say, well, preacher, how do you do it? You follow the Holy Spirit. You hold the standard of the Holy Spirit up.

Now, the first thing you do is you win the battle within you, win the battle within you. And then if you win the battle within you, then you ask the Holy Spirit to give you victory over the problems without. I was thinking last night, our church can either become a millennium or an Armageddon, depending on whether we follow the Spirit's leadership or not.

It can be done. It can be done. That's one reason why our college students, we're not going to let our college students criticize other preachers.

We're not going to, in fact, I've said this before, I don't want ever, ever, ever, ever in homiletic class, I don't want a sermon that's preached on chapel ever discussed. It's good points and bad points. I want every point to be a good point.

And I want you to thank God for everybody who speaks on our chapel. And I want us to never rise up in judgment and never be critical and never be unkind and never be accusative. I want us to follow the Holy Spirit so much that we'll win the battle among us.

Now, let me tell you something. I'm going to confess a sin. I snuck a peek or two at the ballgame of San Fernando.

Now that I've been at the altar, and I'm going to tell you why Washington got beat. I'll tell you why she got beat. Washington got 14 points behind and she got rattled and tried to throw the long bomb instead of following her game plan.

She tried to win battle number three without winning battle number one. And she lost. You're not going to win the big battles without, unless you win the battles within us.

Good night, we won't win the battle against the devil if we fuss and fight with each other all the time. But now we're not going to win any of the battles until we get back to that line of scrimmage where the battles are all won. Where love stands face to face with hastiness.

Where temperance stands face to face with drunkenness and cleanness. Stands face to face with uncleanness and goodness. Stands face to face with revelry and yield to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Each one wins his own particular battle. Now if those battles are won, the team battles are won. But you can't win the team battle until you win the little battles in the line where one player fights another.

Anybody that knows football knows that games are won basically in the line and basically in the offensive line. The players that get the least salary and the least credit win the game. Unseen! I know it.

And right down in here, this unseen place. That's where your problem is. Don't you recall in Ezekiel, I think it's chapter nine, the angel took the man of God to the temple and he said, I want you to bore a hole in the temple.

Now he said, look through that hole. There's a room. It's called the chamber of his imagery where the men of God, the priests if you please, but they have all kinds of foul, dirty, filthy things.

Now he said, look at it. That's your problem. And right in here, in your heart and in my heart, here's the problem.

If we can win the battle right here, then we can, if I can keep my own heart right, I can get along with Brother Vineyard. And if I can get along with Brother Vineyard, I can get along with anybody. Now if I can, now we, Brother Vineyard, you and I will never have any problem if you can win the battle on the inside and I can win the battle on the inside.

That'll take care of the war among us. And then if you and I can be sure the war among us is okay, so we're united, then we can win the battle on the outside. We have to win.

Now what's the secret? The secret is right here in the heart. The psalmist said, let the words of my mouth, the 19th Psalm and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. He said again, cleanse thou me from secret false.

And those secret false are false. I don't even know I have myself. Those false I don't even realize I have.

Reveal them to me and cleanse me from this secret false. Now the third war we fight is the war without us. Don't forget that this book of James was written in the first century when Christians were being persecuted unmercifully.

In our Sunday school lessons, we've learned that in the first century, they would go out and take animals and kill them and take the skins, those animals, and put those skins on the outside of a Christian's body and play like the Christian was an animal and they'd give awards to people who shot the Christians because they were animals, covered in animal skin. They're boiled in hot oil and they're burned alive as fire and provide light for the revelings and parties and athletic contests. Now we're going to have fighting from without, but listen to me, all enemies from without cannot stop the First Baptist Church of Hammond if we can stay together.

And if we can stay together, if we do stay together, we're going to be sure that each of us has his heart. The battle is won. Love has won the battle over hate and cleanness over uncleanness and goodness over revelings and peace over strife.

Now if those battles are won, and that's where the battle is, and that's where the victory must be won, is right in here. For if battle number one, the great Super Bowl, if battle one, if it can be won, then battle two can be won. And if battle two can be won, battle three can be won.

How do you win them? You win them in yielding to the presence of the Holy Spirit. I was thinking last night of the day when I first met the Holy Spirit. Oh, I knew he was a person.

I knew he indwelt me, but I'd never talked with him. And then one wonderful day, I became acquainted with the Holy Spirit. And from that day to this, I talked to him.

Every day I talked to him. But the fist makes fun of me when I say this. When I get up in the morning, I'll say, Holy Spirit, what should I wear today? And this guest would come in in the morning at the office and say, you didn't ask the Spirit if you ought to wear that, did you? And I pay him for that, too.

He gets paid for that. But I asked him, I get up in the morning, and I say, Holy Spirit, what should I wear this morning? By the way, when I first learned about the Holy Spirit, I didn't have to pray that prayer. I just said, Holy Spirit, should I wear it this morning? I only had one outfit.

It's for every occasion. But I said, Holy Spirit, what should I wear this morning? And time and time again, I'll go to the airport, and I'll be having to adjust a flight, and I'll have to take a flight to a distant city. And I'll say, Holy Spirit, which flight should I take? One day I was flying from Dallas, Texas to San Antonio, I'm sorry, Houston, Texas.

And I flew down to Houston, and went out to the airport and called a plane back to Dallas, and I had a choice of planes. And I said, Holy Spirit, which plane should I take today? And I asked him to control the line, and I took this plane. The other plane was an Electra.

It went down over Austin, and everybody on the plane was killed. I owe my life to walking in the Spirit one day. Holy Spirit, what plane should I take? Holy Spirit, what subject should I take? Holy Spirit, what route should I take to church? Holy Spirit, give me the victory today.

Holy Spirit, don't let me hate anybody today. Holy Spirit, let me be kind to everybody today. Holy Spirit, don't let me have an evil, wicked mind today.

Holy Spirit, give me the victory over covetousness today. Holy Spirit, don't let me envy today. Holy Spirit, don't let me have a wicked heart today.

Keep my mind clean. Holy Spirit, give me the victory. Give me the victory.

Give me the victory. Give me the victory. Holy Spirit, give power today to my team member, love.

Holy Spirit, give power to my team member, joy. Holy Spirit, give power to my team member, peace. Holy Spirit, give power to my team member, longsuffering.

Holy Spirit, give power to my team member, gentleness. Holy Spirit, give power to my team member, goodness. Holy Spirit, give power to my team member, meekness.

Holy Spirit, give power to my team member, temperance. Holy Spirit, Give power to my team member, faith, and as we walk in the Spirit, then the Spirit of God is the standard that's raised high when the battles come. I have battles.

I have battles. I have battles on the inside, so many times, battles on the inside, and I must say, Oh Holy Spirit, give me the victory over the war on the inside today. And sometimes Christian people get offended at me and they don't, they say things to me and say things about me, and there are times I want to retaliate.

There are times I'd like to explain my side of the story. There are times I feel like if they understood, they wouldn't say it. But I must not talk back.

I must not have revenge. I must not defend myself. I must say, Holy Spirit, thou art my defender.

Holy Spirit, don't let me be unkind to that person. Holy Spirit, let me help that person. Holy Spirit, let me do good to those that hate me and pray for those that spitefully use me.

Holy Spirit, let there not be strife between me and anybody. And then I find other battles, people on the outside, they curse. Oh, they curse.

You'd be surprised how many cursings I get. I mean bold-faced cursings I get right to my face. And I must say, a fellow walked in my office the other day, tried to get in, I wouldn't let him in.

He knocked on the door. And a lot of times I don't open, but I was scared not to open it. I went to the door and there he stood.

I've got a thing or two to say to you. And I think I could have squashed him. Even if it whipped me, I'd enjoy the fight if I'd just gotten a few fingernails in his eyeballs on the way down.

Oh, he was cruel. He cursed me all up and down that hallway. He cursed me.

Nobody was here but me. In fact, it was a holiday. Nobody was here but me.

He cursed me. He threatened to hit me. Now you say, Brother Howes, what did you want to do? I wanted to take an ice pick and stick it in his eyeball.

I wanted to stick my fingernails right in his stomach and claw out some of his energy. You know why you said amen? Because you're glad that I have the same temptation you have. First Corinthians 10.13 says that, doesn't it? There's no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.

You say, what did you say? I didn't say anything unkind. I said, Holy Spirit, he doesn't understand. I pray you'd give me the victory.

I don't always win the victory. Sometimes I lose it. That particular day, I won the victory and he walked away.

There's never a time when a Christian ought to be retaliatory. There's never a time when a Christian ought to hate or seek revenge or defend himself or fight his own battles. He fights our battles.

He fights our battles. It's up to him. And so when the enemy comes, whether it's the enemy on the inside or the enemy among us or the enemy for without, as the enemy comes, we hold high the standard, even the Spirit of God.

That's what the Bible means when it says, walk in the Spirit, you'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The flesh wants to fight back. The flesh wants to fight.

The flesh wants to be critical. A preacher, one of the ten largest Sunday schools in the world, you wouldn't believe, you wouldn't believe what he said about our Sunday school. He said, we don't have a single responsible adult in our church.

He said, they have 8,000 in Sunday school, 7,900 of them are little bitty kids. And I said, we do have, we have three responsible adults in our church, four or five maybe. And but, oh my, my, my, my, I'd like to bring him here some Sunday and let him count the money.

We sure have got a bunch of rich kids. They're all kids. They sure have given a lot of money through the years.

But that's not for me to fight back. That's not my job. He fights my battles.

I couldn't tell you tonight, I won't. If God ever leaves me somewhere else, I'm going to tell some stories that have happened here in Hammond. I won't tell you.

I won't tell you. You'll never hear them from me. But I could tell you some miraculous stories, how the people have set their lives to corrupt this preacher or this church, and they didn't live a month afterwards.

God has caused cars to slide on slippery streets. God has caused drivers to come over a hill and head on with people. Because the dear Lord, the dear Holy Spirit is the one that fights our battles for us.

It is. No need to fight my battles. No need at all.

He does that. No need to retaliate. He does that.

Now if our church, if our church wins the great battles against sin and against wickedness and against lewdness, if we do it, we've got to depend on Him, the Holy Spirit. And if we do that, we have to win the battle with each other. Look up to the schoolteacher that you hate up here in the choir.

In fact, just pick out any of them. You hate them all, don't you? And stop and realize the tough time the schoolteacher has. What if you had to teach a class with a bunch of kids like that in the class? Think of all the suffering you'd have to go through then.

I just can't stand her. She's a... Oh, I just hate her. You lost the battle, didn't you? You lost the battle.

I won't speak to her again. You lost the battle, didn't you? I'll get you back if it's the last thing I ever do. You lost the battle, didn't you? Huh? You lost the battle.

How can you win it? You've got to yield to the Holy Spirit. The greatest battle that's ever being fought in this world tonight wasn't fought out in Los Angeles, Texas. The greatest battle is not being fought in Vietnam tonight.

The greatest battle ever fought is being fought right here.

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