

Today We Fight!

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of fighting spiritually for our lives and families by relying on God's strength and truth.

Duration: 57:49

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faith and Trust in God"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the urgent call for believers to engage in spiritual warfare, asserting that today is the day to fight for our health, families, and purpose against the enemy's attempts to steal our peace and fulfillment. He encourages Christians to recognize that their true battle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces, and that they must equip themselves with the full armor of God to stand firm. Idleman stresses the importance of prayer, fasting, and understanding the enemy's tactics, urging believers to take a strong stance in their faith and to actively fight against the distractions and lies of the world. He reminds the congregation that true strength comes from God and that they must remain vigilant and prepared for the ongoing spiritual battle. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to fight back against the enemy's schemes and to trust in God's power and truth.

Transcript

The message this morning is, today we fight. Today we fight. You have to get this in your mindset as a believer.

Today we fight for our health, for our family, for our marriages, for our business, finances, for purpose. The enemy will try to go and rob purpose from you, and peace, and fulfillment, mental health, emotional health, physical health. We have to get to a point sometimes where we say, okay, enough is enough.

Today we fight. Are you tired of feeling defeated all the time, and getting beat up, and really just life is throwing you some curveballs, and you just want to feel like giving up. And I often tell people that the difference between an 18-year-old who is bored at church, and a 38-year-old who is worshipping, and broken by church, is something called life.

Battle. They've went through the battles of life. They've been hurt deeply.

They've had a lot of disappointments and setbacks. But let me encourage you that those can actually draw you closer to God, not further away. The enemy wants to use those to push you further away from God, but God wants to use those opportunities as times that you draw close to him.

And I can look back in my own life, and the difficult seasons that you don't want are actually the seasons that I cherish the most, because they drew me closer to Christ. Now something we have to remember, though, is fighting on Sunday is not enough. Do you ever see that the Navy SEALs take off a day? Or anybody on the battlefield? Hey, let's just take this weekend off.

We know the enemy is right there, and let's just kind of take some time off. Fighting, Sunday fighting is not enough. We can come here, we can get recharged, we can get encouraged, we can get built up, but then here comes Monday, and here comes Tuesday.

So you're gonna have to learn how to fight. And sometimes you do have to pull yourself up and say, okay, today we fight. Today we get back on track.

Today I'm gonna contend for my marriage, I'm gonna contend for my families, and my family, I'm gonna contend for the things that the enemy is trying to take from me. So the first thing we need to do is this, know the enemy. Your enemy is not your friend.

The devil is not in red, dressed in red, holding a pitchfork. He's not easy to spot. He comes to kill, to steal, and to destroy.

Shane, why are you telling us this? So you're prepared. Because so many people go into life unprepared, undisciplined, untrained, and we become easy targets. So we find our enemy in Ephesians 6, or at least how to fight the enemy.

Ephesians 6.12, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. So your fight, the fight for your spirituality, the fight for your relationship with God is not going to be fought with this. That's why I often say your AR-15 isn't gonna get you very far.

But your prayer closet will. And see, our gun safes are full, but our prayer closets are empty. And that's where the real power comes from that song we sang.

Praying that, when we pray, when we sing hallelujah, our prayers and our worship are pulling heaven down. And the enemy can't do much in a praying, worshiping heart who's seeking God. That's where the warfare really is.

So he says it's not against flesh and blood. It's not really against people. And you might say, come on, people are the problem.

Have you ever noticed that? I mean, I have no real problem with God. You know, we can just worship God all year long, and there's really no, it's really enjoying, there's enjoyment. But when it comes to people, that's where the problem comes in.

So we don't wrestle against people, even though that is manifested, that's revealed through others often. But we fight against what? Principalities, against the angelic realm, and against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, meaning the world rulers. And you know this, right? That the majority of those governing our nation or other countries are not godly.

There's a battle going on. The rulers of this age pushing the darkness against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. So Paul's saying, listen, know your enemy.

It's not against flesh and blood. It's not against people. Yes, they're revealing themselves.

They're manifesting themselves in people. But there are demonic triggers behind it. There are strongholds.

There are principalities that are waging war against us. So the weapons must match our warfare. Many times we don't come at warfare with the right weapons.

What do we do? Well, we get angry. I'll show them. Wrong warfare.

God goes, oh, that's not going to work. Let me handle it. No, I'll handle it.

Have you ever said that? Just me? Oh, I'll handle this. Right? Your neighbor bothers you up the street somewhere. My neighbor up the street actually comes here, so I better be careful on that one.

Your neighbor down the street bothers you. I'll handle this. I'll handle this.

And God says, no, let me handle this. Well, how? Well, we're getting there. But I love Zechariah on this God says, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.

And I love context of scripture because you can make scripture say anything you want. And the context here is God is saying, you're not going to accomplish, you're not going to defeat this enemy, accomplish my will, defeat this enemy by your power and by your strength. Not by might, physical strength, not by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.

That's why even the Bible says curse is the nation who trusts in their chariots and the horses, basically in their armies. We're putting our trust in armies and not in the living God. So God says it's going to be by my power, by my authority, by my wisdom.

So that's the setting there. So what are we really battling? Well, Barnes, he's a commentator. He breaks it down into four areas for us, our own sinful propensities, which are part of the kingdom of darkness.

Are you aware of that? There's something in you that has a propensity to do evil, an inclination to do evil. So let's say this is evil. There's a magnet there that's pulling me.

There's an inclination, there's a propensity to sin. So that's part of this pulling down strongholds and wrestling with the demonic realm. There's already something in me that's pulling me towards it.

Also, the evil passions of others, their pride, their ambition, and the spirit of revenge that is working in the world is also part of the kingdom of darkness. And it pulls on us as well. Have you ever met those people? They're prideful and they're ambitious and they just want to take you out? And you think they're the problem.

The evil customs, the laws, the opinions, the employments, the pleasures of this world, they are also part of the dark kingdom. What about air and superstition and false doctrine? They're also part of this kingdom of darkness. So we have this heavenly host of wickedness.

We have this worldly system of wickedness. And all these things are coming against us. And sometimes people say, Shane, that is too much.

I can't grasp that. That's kind of negative. Actually, it's not when you understand that none of that can do anything against God.

The breath of his nostrils blows back entire armies. He sets one king up and he pulls another kingdom down. Nothing can happen outside of God's sovereignty.

You've got, Leonard Ravenhill used to say, you've got the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and two-thirds of the angels on our side. You can't go home and cry about it. So how do you tap into that that heavenly warfare? And that's what Paul is teaching us.

So then we look at how to fight. We have to know how to fight because spiritual warfare requires spiritual weapons. God, I'm getting tongue-tied today.

I think I spoke too much yesterday at the health seminar. Two and a half hours straight of speaking, my voice is wearing on me. You didn't have to clap.

So maybe that's a good plug. Make sure to watch that or get the CD on your way out because a lot of you junk food junkies should have been there. I'm going to get off that rabbit trail.

Let me get right back on here. Spiritual warfare requires spiritual weapons and that doesn't make sense to a lot of people because in this inclination to sin is also my inclination to pull out the wrong weapon of anger and bitterness and unforgiveness. Isn't that how we handle problems a lot of times? A problem comes and we react instead of respond.

We get upset and we react in the flesh and I don't know if that's ever produced anything good in my life. When you usually you cause more problems instead of waiting on God and using his arsenal. Well what is it? We're getting there.

Hold tight. But first let's look at Ephesians 6, 10 where this all started. Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

His might. So he's telling the church in Ephesus. He's actually ending Ephesians.

The book of Ephesians is coming to an end here shortly and he's saying finally when all said and done. When Paul says finally brethren he's bringing everything to an end and you need to take note on this. He told the church in Philippi same thing.

Finally brethren. What did he say in Philippi? Finally brethren whatever things are pure. Whatever things are noble.

Whatever things are upright. Whatever things are good. Whatever things are wholesome.

Meditate on those things. And then here he says okay church finally be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Basically we kind of hear that.

We think okay that sounds great. What does it mean? Well it means this. Be strong in his authority.

Be strong in the way that he does things. Be strong in his principles. His guidelines.

His will. And much of the problem we're seeing in here in our nation today is a spiritual problem. Spiritual problem.

It's drifting away from God. So people are not doing things in his power and his authority and his might. Listen you got to get back to the creator to find out how the creation should act.

You have to go get back to the blueprints called the bible to find out what and how people should act. I'm about ready to take another rabbit trail. So I mean you look at how our government officials are acting and it's appalling.

It's sad. Too much pride. Too much arrogance on both sides.

So verse 11. Put on the whole armor of God. Put on the whole armor of God.

Now this armor you don't take off. Remember that. This isn't let me put on this armor and take it off.

Who I am on Sunday is not who I am on Monday. Oh you better change that today. Because who a person is on Sunday is who they need to be all week.

This isn't partial armor. This isn't coming to church like let me check that off church. Let me check off gas.

Let me car. I gotta wash my car. I uh where else.

I gotta go grocery shopping. I gotta go to the nail salon. I gotta go there get my hair done.

I got in church and put it on. No this is this is serious. And I think a lot of us need to wake up to the fact that the enemy is coming after us.

You have to be prepared. He wants nothing more than to destroy your marriage. To destroy your families.

To knock you off track with God. He hates especially if you're a spirit-filled believer on fire for God. Worshiping God on your face before him and praying.

You got a big target. Because you're doing the most damage in his kingdom. And don't let me that just don't let that discourage you from being a spirit-filled believer.

You should seek that. Because if you're not then you're a weak Christian. You're easy prey.

You're like driftwood in the streams of life. Going wherever the enemy wants to to to push you. Partial armor allows too many cracks.

We have to be fully engaged. So once you know the enemy then you then you realize okay here's how I have to fight. I have to fight in God's might and God's strength with the whole armor of God.

How do we do that? Now we have to over the over overpower the enemy this way. Verse 13. Therefore take up the whole armor of God.

The whole armor that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand therefore having gird your waist with truth. Having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet.

Basically that means covering your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Now you might say wow that sounds interesting. What is that all about? How do I how do I do that? Well first let's look at the first thing.

That you may be able to withstand and having done all to stand. And verse 14. Stand therefore.

There's a lot of standing. Well what he's talking about here is not necessarily physically standing. Okay I'm standing here I'm ready.

No the standing is right here. This is a strong stance of an attitude. Have you ever heard that person boy they sure are the you see a little two-year-old they sure are self-willed.

They're they're strong willed. They've got a boy you're not taking that cracker from them. Same thing with the believer.

A strong stance. Strong willed. I am standing here.

Not necessarily about you can be you can be sitting and be standing. You can be laying in your bed praying and still be standing. Because it's a strong stance that says come hell or high water I'm following God.

I'm taking a stance for my family. I'm going to pray even when I don't see results. I'm going to worship even when I don't feel like it.

I'm going to stand. And actually if you if we did a survey through the Old Testament there are times where God would say like to Moses for example and having done all stand. Just hold the ground.

Just stand. Moses I'll deliver the people. You stand.

You hold the ground. Joshua you stand. Samuel you stand.

David just stand your ground. And it's the same call to Christians today when the culture comes in with the flood of corruption. He just says you stand on the moral authority that I have given you.

Here and no further. You can the pulpits can say no that is not good. We shouldn't allow that.

We stand on the authority of God's Word. And in that standing there is strength. It's moral fortitude.

Fortitude it's making up your mind and saying this is a priority. This is important. I am not wavering.

And it's ironic because how we stand mentally is how we stand physically. How I stand to you and how I preach this message has everything to do with what's going on up here. Taking that stand.

And some of you maybe need to take a stance in this area. To say okay enough is enough. I'm not wavering anymore because a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

We know that the prophet Elisha rebuked the children of Israel. He said how long will you waver? How long will you falter? How long will you go between two opinions? If God is God follow him. I'd love to go on on Christian television and just preach that right into the camera.

How long will you waver between two opinions? If Baal be God follow him. If you love this world follow him. But if God be God follow him.

How long will you waver between two opinions? You cannot serve two masters. You'll love the one and hate the other or you'll despise one and be loyal to the other. Stop wavering.

How long? How long America will you waver? How long will you be politically correct? How long will you not care about what's going on? How long will you waver? Wake up and take a stand and say let God be God and every other system of thought and theology come to nothing. How long will you waver? Boy that could be a whole new sermon on that because that's what's happening. We look at how did this happen in our nation.

Well it goes back decades ago from not standing, from caving in, political correctness. That's where that word comes from. The word political correctness.

You have to say what is politically correct and doesn't offend too many people. Well the Bible offends. It's meant that's what we're standing on.

We're standing on the truth. A hundred, I don't know a couple hundred thousand churches. Last I checked I don't know three hundred thousand churches.

How many are actually standing on the truth? But that's where it starts. That's how you're going to get the stance for spiritual warfare. So the imagery here is the stance as a fighting position.

Okay it's not necessarily physical but it comes out physically but it's happening here. Okay I'm standing and you have this the culture's pushing and pushing and that's why I believe we're also where we're at because we eventually just say enough is enough. All right caving in.

Could you imagine 50 years ago if they tried to push on America that men who think they're women can use bathrooms and share them with girls? You try that 50 years ago. It would have been laughed out of the courts and redefining marriage. They would have said have you lost your mind? And now some stage gender neutral on their birth certificate.

Are you kidding me? See this is appalling. Male, female, but politically correct. I don't want to offend.

I don't want upset. But see what you're doing is you're not helping people. You help them by telling them the truth.

Hey you struggle with gender identity? It's okay. God loves you. Let me tell you what's going on.

I struggle with whatever. You know you help them. What we're doing is we're allowing people to continue in their sin whether it's this issue or gay marriage or whatever it is and we're not getting stronger and better as a nation.

We're getting a nation now that that's addicted to opiates for our anxiety and our depression. Well where's all this peace? The church has been suppressing people for hundreds of years and not letting them be free. And so now that you're free where's the peace? Where's the enjoyment? Where's the empowerment? No people are still miserable because they're rejecting God.

And you take a stance. You don't have to be mean spirited but in your mind you have to say okay Lord I'm taking a stance for you and for your word. And then obviously that leads right into number two.

Here's how you fight the battle. You gird your life with the belt of truth. You support your life with the belt of truth.

Want me to take mine off? What will happen? No they're not going to follow that right. But what is this doing? This is very important. It's a belt of truth.

It's holding every, if not I'm going to be like this the whole time and not getting, how do they wear their pants down here now? With no belt. That would be so hard. It doesn't even make sense.

But what's missing? The support. The truth. That holds everything together.

So as you take a stand what's holding your life together right now? Facebook? I don't know if Facebook is a curse or a blessing. Because I've watched shows that are so pathetic I'm like you have to be kidding me. People wake up, their first thought is how many likes did I have on my post? Their whole life is revolved around how many likes they had on their post.

And nobody liked it and they're depressed. Or negative comments. And their whole life is built on falsehood.

And we look at the news. Have you ever scanned through the news? You just want to put a gun to your head. To hell in a handbasket.

Look what is going on. We are falling apart. No there is still a God on the throne.

That's why you have to hold everything together with truth. Go to the truth of God's Word. God says I will not be mocked.

Whatever a man sows in his heart he will reap. So what is holding your life together? How many of you spend a significant amount of time each day securing the belt of truth? Does it hold you up every day? So when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord is going to raise up a standard against it. How? With the truth.

You're not going to succeed. You're going to fail. No here's what God's truth is.

God doesn't love you. He doesn't care about you. Look what you're going through.

No here's what the truth says. And we reinforce the truth. And I'm just concerned that many Christians are not into the Word.

They're not into the truth. What are they into then Shane? Netflix. Voodoo.

This. YouTube. That's where they're getting their truth.

And that's why if you're getting your truth from the media nowadays, you don't even know what to believe. And that's what's creating this culture of fear in our nation. The disrespecting authorities.

There's no truth. Truth is vague. Can we really know truth? And so that holds everything together.

If your life is falling apart, what are you doing with truth? Because the Bible says even when life is falling apart God's not. That's the truth. Even when everything's falling apart, I'm surrounded by you.

Even though I'm surrounded by the enemy, I'm surrounded by you. And you reinforce the truth of God's Word. What about a breastplate of righteousness? The breastplate of righteousness.

It guards your heart. Here's what it says right here. Having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

So if we had time we could talk about the present tense and the active tense and all these tenses of the verb. But he's saying having put on the breastplate. So he's assuming that you're putting on the breastplate of righteousness.

Now most of you know this, but some don't. What he's also referring to is the breastplate of righteousness is putting on the imputed righteousness of Christ. That's a big theological term.

All that means is because of what Christ has done on the cross and I've repented, I believe I can put on the righteousness of Christ. So you stand before God someday not because of what I have done but because of what the cross has done, because of what Christ has done. And we don't go to God in our own righteousness and we don't want to make the mistake of saying okay I'm going to fight the enemy in my righteousness.

Oh Lord. That's called pride and pride cometh before a. So putting on the breastplate of righteousness, which does beg the question, because a lot of people listen to this later, I don't know everyone, have you put on that breastplate? Have you believed in Jesus Christ that he is the only way, I'm going to get controversial, I'm going to offend people with this statement, he is the only way, the only truth, the only life, no man comes to the father except through Christ and Christ alone. That is not correct.

That is not correct. That's pretty easy to say in here but go try to do that at the college like I did debating an atheist. And ooh, you just, why? Have you ever thought, why? Why does that name, everybody can talk about God is this and God's here and God's this, Jesus Christ, oh, oh, what happened? Because they know that at that name every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord.

At that name even demons have to tremble. At that name when you say, oh Jesus, you're in a better spot even though you're in the pit of hell, earthly speaking, even though you're going through hell and you don't know what's going on, Lord, this sickness, this debilitating disease, my family's against me, but oh Christ, if you call on that name, there is no other name under heaven and earth by which all men will be saved. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess.

That's why people are getting killed right now in the Middle East because they profess the name of Jesus Christ, not Allah, not God as some force out there, but Jesus Christ. That name, there's power in that name, healing in that name, deliverance in that name. Every chain is broken by the name of Jesus Christ, whom the Son sets free, is free indeed.

I might start preaching here in a minute and get off track because that name is so powerful. If they would just grab that name and hold on to that name, but chain, I'm not delivered, I'm not set free, hold on, hold on, hold on to the anchor because there's still a storm. Jesus said, he who hears my sayings and does them, I will liken him to a man who built his house upon the rock and when the rain descended, the wind beat upon that house, the flood came, it did not fall because it was founded upon the rock of Jesus Christ.

If you build your life on Christ, if you build your marriage on Christ, although everything around you may fall apart, you will stand there as a beacon of light pointing others to Christ. None of that was in the first service. Darn it.

I'll probably get an email, I shouldn't say darn it, so that is just so important. Put on the breastplate of righteousness. Isn't it interesting that that guards your heart? I don't think there's an accident of language

there.

I don't think, well, that's a good coincidence. No, it guards your heart and the heart is mentioned I think it was, I have it here, a thousand times in the Bible as the center for moral activity. It regulates emotions and actions.

It's our conscience. So Proverbs says above all guard your heart. Why? Because it affects everything you do.

Do you know that? Your heart affects everything you do. It affects everything I do. It affected this sermon.

What you just heard was what God has been planting in my heart over the weeks, over the months. So it affects my heart and then I affect your heart. Above all else, guard your heart.

Well, how do feelings mess us up? Well, where do you want to start? Here's what you need to really guard against in this type of battle is anger. Guard your heart against this because what do we do in anger? We lash out. Anybody say things they wish they could take back recently? I haven't recently, but I could go back a little while and oh, where did that come? Reel it back in like a fishing lure.

But it goes out, it does its damage and part of spiritual warfare is the enemy wants you to lash out in anger because that's where you hurt people. Have you ever heard the phrase fly off the handle? You know where that comes from? With an axe, you're hitting that wood. Uh-oh, it flew off the handle.

It's an old English from the 1800s, I think, but it's relevant to us. Fly off the handle. Anger, that's what it does.

Flies off course, get off course. An angry person, it's a very dangerous person. And many of you know, you've come from angry homes, maybe angry parents, maybe you've struggled with it.

It's a destroyer. Many men incarcerated right now are there because of angry fathers or absentee fathers. Anger.

The Bible says, anger worketh not the righteousness of man. I'm sorry, anger worketh not the righteousness of God. You can't get anything done through anger.

So as we're going into spiritual battle, spiritual fighting, the enemy is going to try to get you to fly off the handle. Isn't that the first step before divorce? You see loving, humble, broken couples heading to divorce court? Angry. Also, what about frustration? The enemy wants to get us frustrated.

I'm frustrated in this battle. Listen, I'm sympathetic with you because I'm frustrated in battle sometimes. You want a lot of spiritual battle, plan a church.

From all sides. Sometimes some of it's self-created, other times it's just, you know, leading a lot of people. There's a lot of issues and a lot of frustrations.

And many times people want to say, forget it. I'm beginning to doubt God. Do you know that's the end result of frustration? The enemy, the reason frustration comes in is because when a person's motivated, they're walking in a very good, very healthy direction.

They're doing things for God. They're leading people to God. They're doing God's will.

But when they get frustrated, they say, I'm beginning to doubt God. I don't know if this is God's will. I'm not doing what I thought I'd be doing.

And we usually rate success by numbers or by money. That's how we rate success. Have you ever quit something? This isn't working.

What are you rating it on? Because God never looks at numbers. He's concerned. I'm not concerned, but I'm sure they're relevant from time to time.

But he's looking at faithfulness. Faithfulness. And that's why I see so many people in the ministry, they're so down.

They're so frustrated. They're so down. Shane, it's just not working.

I'm frustrated. I'm frustrated. Well, how are you measuring success? How are you measuring success? You have to be careful.

A lot of us struggle with this. It's so funny. I'll tell you something.

People listen to this on the radio or different places. And nine times out of 10, it's like, I thought there'd be like 10,000 people at your church. You know, they come in like, well, like, why don't more people want this? Yeah, but a lot don't.

A lot don't want to be hit with the truth. And I know, I know, I can name about six of the largest, some of the largest churches in our nation. I know people that actually know the pastors.

And they are very politically correct, and they know they need to be to have a large audience. It is the truth. There are others, there's people out there that this doesn't always happen.

But the majority of the opinion in our nation right now, and if I named them, you would know who they are. I even have people who go to their churches who actually know them personally, that they have made statements that, you know, they can't, they have to be careful what they talk about, because they'll lose a certain majority of people. And they need to be seeker sensitive.

They need to be careful. They need to be, for example, Shane, I can't, people say, I can't talk about abortion. I've had many who experienced abortion in my congregation.

I can't, that would not go over well. I can't talk about gay marriage. A lot of people struggle with homosexuality.

Boy, if I talked about hell, I think I'd lose half the deacon board. And if I do calls to repentance and all this stuff, it's just too hard for people. You got to put the cookies down low where they can grab them.

You know what that's called? That's called a puppet. That person is not mildly filled with God's spirit, because a person mildly filled with God's spirit will come in and they'll wreck the house. They don't, they don't, they don't care about opinions.

They're like, God, what do you want me to do? What do you want me to do? Something I'll share with you, too. It's kind of hard for me, but it's, it's not because it comes with the territory, but it's not always the case. It's kind of funny, me and my wife laugh, but many times when I'm asked to speak somewhere, I'm not

coming back.

At certain churches or conferences. Because what's the goal? Crowd. We're trying to build, we're trying, what are you doing? You're wrecking the crowd.

Yeah, wreck it, Ralph. You, you got to go, you got to go in and the church needs to be wrecked again. The church needs to be broken again.

That's where the power comes from. That's where the anointing comes from. Isn't that true, huh? It's, it's, it's sad because my, it hurts my feelings sometimes, but in big conference centers, I can mention them big churches.

I don't know if I'm going back because it's like, man, what was that? I thought you're just going to kind of come be a cheerleader, you know? I remember one time I spoke at the American Baptist assembly in Wisconsin, the American Baptist. I don't know if you've heard of that denomination. Well, they forgot to tell me that they were voting that at that conference about ordaining gay clergy.

So, but I should, I should say this just because people are listening live and maybe don't know this. We, I have a heart for people who struggle with any sin. I don't, I don't, I don't pick, pick on anybody.

I have, I have friends who struggle with same sex attraction. There's some at this church who struggle with alcohol, who struggle with Xanax, who struggle with pornography. We struggle.

It's, it's not, but the day we start to say that sin is no longer sin, we can't help people anymore. And when we cower back because people aren't going to like that, but that's what helps people. Do you know, we get for the negative emails, we actually get a lot more positive emails.

People, I came across your YouTube video. I struggled with same sex attraction and thought it was okay and embrace this lifestyle. I came to understand that I need God and I need repentance.

Thank you so much. I'm crying right now as I'm writing this. They've been set free, but so you have to tell people the truth.

That God loves us however we are, wherever we are, but it doesn't mean we're to continue in sin. What God clearly calls sin and also depression. Depression will come in.

Have you ever dealt with depression? It's debilitating. Depression says, forget it. I'm going back to my sin.

And then the gospel of peace, the gospel of peace helps us stay focused on the main goal, which is what our feet moving. Have you ever heard the phrase idle hands are the devil's workshop? Boy, is that not the truth? Anytime I've seen him slip people up, he tries to knock me off course. It's when you're, you're an idle, you're, you're in vacation mode.

Like, Oh, I'm just going to kick back for a while. Just going to relax. Just not do much at all.

Idle hands are the devil's play things. It's like throwing, get this picture of throwing some wood into a stream. That river, that wood just goes wherever the stream takes it.

That's what happens with idle hands. So what he's saying here is shod your feet with the gospel of peace, walk, walk in that, in, in, in that peace and that gospel. And that's your focal point.

So wherever I go, bringing the gospel of peace in my workplace, the gospel of peace, you don't have to talk about all the time you've got work to do, but there's, you've got a motive behind what you're doing when you're on vacation. Hey, we're going to honor God in this. Don't get into vacation mode and drift off course.

So many people get knocked off course when they're bored and sitting at home. Isn't that true? That's when we get into trouble. Very rarely do you see people get into trouble working for the kingdom of God.

It's when they get sidetracked and get off the course. So I want to talk to you briefly. I went way too long today, but I want to tell you about bringing in reinforcements through bring, bring in reinforcements through prayer and fasting.

Uh-oh. Did he just say what I thought he said? Prayer and fasting. Why is that so important? Because you have to silence the voice of flesh so you can hear the voice of God.

The flesh is always screaming, feed me, give it to me, feed me, give to me. And the, and flesh starves the voice of, fasting starves the voice of the flesh. See, prayer draws me closer to God, but fasting starves the flesh.

That's why Jesus said this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. And most of the time, and I would, I'll say this all the time, but my mom said never say all. So when somebody has an addiction to something, let's say pornography, they also have an addiction to something else, say alcohol or food or gaming addiction or gambling.

See, it all flows together. Once the flesh is given full reign in one area, if there's, if there's not starving it, it'll take over in other areas. You'll never see somebody falling in this area and very disciplined in other areas of the flesh.

It's all tied together because the flesh has been strengthened. So fasting silenced the voice of the flesh. Here's why this is so important.

The world commands volume. Doesn't it? The volume, Facebook, the media, everything is loud. The world says, listen, listen, loud, loud.

How do we win arguments? Do we get quiet or do we get louder, louder, louder, right? And that's how the world communicates. But God says, shh, be quiet. Listen to my still small voice.

But we say that doesn't make any sense. How you can hear God's voice? Well, here's what, here's what happens. Imagine all of you talking after the service is over.

Everybody's talking and you see your favorite athlete come up here or your favorite president. And they have the microphone. What are you going to do? You can hear a pin drop.

What happens? Because God, God's voice will not compete with other voices. All other voices must submit to the authority of God's word. So once you begin to remove those other voices, God doesn't have to get loud.

Hey, Shane, listen, Shane, remember me up here. Don't forget about me. He stands back and he says, when you're ready to listen, I will speak.

Remove those other voices. Remove those distractions. Remove all those things that are pulling you away from me and then sit on your face before me and wait and you'll hear my still small voice leading and guiding and directing you.

And that's what prayer and fasting does. Fasting silence the voice of the flesh. King's stomach has to be dethroned now and then.

You know King's stomach is. He might be speaking right now. And fasting begins.

Can you imagine if we said, you know what? We've locked the doors. Nobody's going to lunch for a few hours. Your kids are fine.

Chuck E. Cheese delivered, which goes against everything I said yesterday. But we're going to seek the voice of God. That's what we're doing March, March 15th and 16th.

Because you have to, you have to. God doesn't compete with voices. I learned the hard way.

Listen to what I'm saying. We think God really want to talk to me. He would meet me.

No, you're too busy. How bad God says, how bad do you want it? If you seek me, you will find me. If you, if you hunger and thirst for me, where are those Christians that used to hunger and thirst for God? Where are those Christians knocking down the door at 6am saying, I need to worship God this morning and hungering and thirsting.

And we remove all of those things and all of those voices. And we wait to hear the still small voice of God. It's so funny when we tell people, you know what? Or somebody says, I don't have TV anymore.

I have this. How do you do that? That is so weird. How do you get by? Well, I'm just, I'm just, people are tired of hearing all these voices all the time.

And you have to remove yourself from these distractions. Listen, gone are the little house on the prairie days where we are bombarded. We are inundated with the wrong voice and you have to separate, you have to back away from that.

That's what the gospel of peace does. It helps you stay focused on the main goal. I have a whole section on fasting off to get to at some other point, but the next, the last point is finish, finish the enemy off with faith.

Verse 16. This word faith before, of course, but here's why it's so important. He said, above all, when Paul says above all, that means what? Above all priority.

Number one, take the shield of faith of which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. So above everything else, take on, pull up, put on, hold on to faith. Why is that important? Because faith believes that God is, is who he said he is.

I trust in you, God. You alone are king. You alone are sovereign.

You hold the president and Russia and China all in the palm of your hands. You can whisper and my, my, my problems disappear. You can do whatever you want.

I trust in you. I have faith in you. Then you put on the breastplate of righteousness.

You gird your, your, your, uh, your, uh, your, uh, waste with the truth. You put, you, you, you work towards bringing the gospel to others, but faith is the foundation of our lives. And I want to take, talk about taking on the helmet and the sword, but it does, it does beg the question.

It says, take on the helmet of salvation. Take on, put on the helmet of salvation. Now for believers, it's a reminder of who Christ is.

It reminds me, it's a reminder of our relationship with God. There's a lot of security in that, but for other people, for many people, maybe even Christians in the church, they have never put on this helmet of salvation. They don't know Jesus Christ.

So I want to ask that question. Have you ever repented of your sin? Have you repented and believed that Jesus is who he said he was, that he is the son of God. He's the only way to God, the father, not good works, not being a good person, but by the shed blood and redemptive work of Christ on Calvary.

And you repent of your sin and you are saved from the wrath that is to come. Another not popular topic, but that's the truth of the Bible. I don't know how I can even preach if you had to avoid all these difficult things.

I'll just go sell cars. My Lord. Because then you're a motivational speaker.

You have a hint of being a con artist. There's an aspect of lying in that. When you don't tell somebody all of the truth, that's still lying.

And then take on the sword. What is the sword? The sword of the spirit is the word of God. And I'm going to end with this.

This is something you probably haven't done in a while. In your own home, but I would encourage you to do it. And churches used to do this a lot more.

It's called the public reading of scripture. And what you do is you read the scripture and it reinforces the truths of God into your mind. Psalm 18.

It says, I will love you. And this is David being chased by enemies. So I don't know about you, but you're David was in a worse spot than most of us in this room.

He said, I will love you. Oh, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliver.

Let this penetrate your heart right now. Don't look at your cell phone. Don't worry about what time it is.

Let God's word speak to you because I believe it's living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword. It will pierce your heart. It will convict and it will build up and it will strengthen.

So he says, the Lord is my rock and my fortress, my deliver, my God, my strength. And whom will I trust? My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised.

So shall I be saved from my enemies. The pangs of death surround me and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of hell surround me.

The snares of death confront me. That's a pretty bad day. In my distress, what did I do? In my distress, I called upon Xanax.

In my distress, what I called upon the Lord and I cried out to my God. He heard my voice from his temple and my cry came before him even to his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled.

The very foundation of the earth will shake under the presence and power and magnitude of God. Even the breadth of his nostrils will knock down Mount Everest. It's that powerful.

If that is the God you serve, get your head on straight and think about who he is. Put that in perspective to your problem. I would like to know what problem is so big to God who hung Juniper and Saturn and holds the earth and sits upon the circle of the earth and rules as creator, creates a universe.

They don't even know how big it is. Galaxies beyond that. This problem is too big.

And sometimes we think like people think, oh God, I know it's a money issue and I know you don't have any right now. But many times the waiting time is so we will seek him with all of our heart, with all of our strength, with all of our might. Thank God for the waiting times.

Thank God sometimes for unanswered prayers. Thank God for unanswered prayers. Thank God that he isn't doing it sometimes in our timing.

And that says, and devouring fire comes from his mouth. He consumes my enemies. For by who can run against a troop? But my God, with his help I can leap over a wall.

As for God, his way is perfect. The word of the Lord is proven. He is a shield to all who trust in him.

Do you trust in him this morning? And I mean really trust in him. Have you been trusting in your 401k? Guess what? Have you been trusting in your social security and retirement? Is that your big plan? Are you trusting in God? Because he might wipe all of that away and say, now will you trust me? That job you've been counting on, it's gone. Now will you trust me? That's real trust.

Because it's so easy to say, oh I trust God when everything's going good. Anybody can say that. But the real challenge is saying, I trust God when all hell is breaking loose.

The word of the Lord is proven. He is a shield to those who trust him. For who is God except the Lord? And who is a rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.

He makes my feet like deer and sets me on a high place. I love this next verse. He teaches my hands to make war.

And then he says, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. Have you ever pulled a hard compound bow? It's, oh this thing is so hard. It's a compound bow.

But try pulling a bow made of bronze. Bow and arrow. You can't.

It's not going anywhere. But this is the God who trains your hands for war. And he does the impossible.

They say, that's not possible. How is that possible? God says, I will train your hands for war. You will pull a bow made of bronze and you will shoot the arrow right at the heart of the enemy.

You will do what no others could say. How can that be done? Because I am your rock. I am your salvation.

You're trusting in me. So I think some of you might maybe need to interrupt the plans of the enemy today. It's time to change course.

It's time to fight. A passive Christian is an oxymoron. We were created to engage warfare.

We think, well I'm created to work and earn money and provide for my family. That's wonderful. But you were created for warfare.

You're created to pray and to fast and to worship and to look to God's word on a daily basis. That's your prayer closet. So the question that I want to leave you with is this.

Today, maybe some of you need to stop fighting. And you say, Shane, you just spent an hour telling me I need to fight. What are you talking about? Some of you need to stop fighting God.

Some of you need to stop fighting God. Some of you are fighting his truth today. If what I said bugs you about his truth, then you're fighting his truth.

Because that's all scripture. This is not my opinion. If you want me to come up here and give my opinion, it's not going to be very powerful.

Because it's wavering. It's weak. It's like, well I think.

I don't know. What do you think? That was the problem in Jesus's day. Did you know that? When they look at Jesus and they said, did you get him? Did you bring him to us? They said, no man ever spoke like this man.

They weren't used to somebody with spiritual authority. That's what God wants you to have. Spiritual authority to pull down, to cast down arguments, pull down every high thing, exalt itself against the knowledge of God.

I wish I had time to even go into that scripture. That's how you, that's the warfare. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

Pull down the weapons of your warfare are not carnal but mighty through God. How? By the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments. What's an argument? Everything against the truth and bringing every thought into captivity.

Was that thought godly? No it wasn't. Then I'm not going to act upon it. You bring that thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

It's a struggle. It's daily warfare. Welcome to the fight.

Today we fight. Don't you think it's time to get back up and start fighting again? Overcome that addiction that you haven't been able to overcome. Don't go back into it.

Get up and fight. Spiritually speaking.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31911.mp3>
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