

# (Come Up Higher) the Place of Battle

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living by the spirit of Christ, rather than by the letter of the law, and seeks to understand the wisdom of God in all things.*

**Duration:** 55:57

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:22-25, Ephesians 6:1-10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Church Unity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how God intentionally left certain things vague in scripture to test people's honesty in interpreting it. He also allows for different opinions on peripheral matters to test whether believers can still be united despite their differences. The speaker emphasizes the importance of caring for others and teaching them to follow Jesus' commands. He highlights the role of gifted individuals in building the church and emphasizes the need to fight against the devil in our homes.

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## Transcript

So, we are studying through the book of Ephesians. And our title is, In the Heavens. So, what all have we considered so far? This is our last study.

We've seen the expression, in the heavens used, showing us the heavens is the place of blessing in the new covenant. This is not true in the old covenant, but it is true in the new. That's what we saw in Ephesians chapter 1, and verse 4, 3. Then, we saw that it is also the place of power.

He raised us up to be in the heavens. The exercise of his power, we saw that in Ephesians chapter 1, and verse 19 and 20. And then we saw yesterday, that the heavens is the place where God wants to demonstrate his wisdom through us, to angelic beings.

The ones that are not fallen, and the ones that are fallen. And so, it is a place where we are to grow in wisdom, and manifest the wisdom of God, that we saw in Ephesians 3, 10. And we saw that also, that one part of this wisdom is related to the mystery that was hidden throughout ages.

And that mystery we saw, is how two fallen human beings, when they are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit, they can become one. And if you find yourself unable to become one, with your fellow elders, fellow believers, then you have to say, I have not understood the mystery. We may have understood it in our head, we may have first when we heard it say, that's not a great mystery, two

people becoming one.

Show me a husband and wife who have become one. It is so rare. The number of people who enter the promised land, Jesus said that few who find the way to life.

In the Old Testament, it was only two out of 600,000 who left Egypt. So if that is the same proportion, it means out of 600,000 believers that you find in the world, you may find only two. Who have really entered into a life of victory.

Many understand it, all 600,000 may understand it. You know, we read that the spies who went into Canaan, they said this is a wonderful land. They made a branch full of grapes, and yeah, we can talk about it, we can talk about victory, and say it's a land flowing with milk and honey, it's wonderful, and never enter it.

That's how the 600,000 were. Out of 600,000, is that a good land? They say, yeah, it's a good land. Wonderful land.

Can you enter it? No, it's difficult. There are many good brothers and sisters who do not know how to become one with their fellow believers. And very often, they have peace at home with their wives, because, like Adam, sought peace at home, somehow settled things with your wife, because you don't want conflict at home.

So I've discovered that it's not just avoiding conflict, overcoming conflict at home is one level, but you can overcome that, and still not have understood this mystery. Because the test is, can you become one with another brother in your church? Let's talk about elders, it begins with the elders. If the elders are not one in a church, the church will never be one.

And this is a mystery. The wisdom that God wants to show the angels in heaven is not how this believer became rich. He's not calling Gabriel and saying, how did this believer manage to build such a big house, or get such a fancy car? Gabriel says, I'm not surprised.

They go around collecting tithes from everybody, anybody can do that. There's no wisdom there. But the angels know that throughout the world, they never see a family anywhere where husband and wife are one.

They see homes without conflict, where the husband is a dictator, and the wife dare not open her mouth. There's peace there. And some homes where the wife is a boss and the husband dare not open his mouth.

There's peace there also. But that is not the peace of God. That is the peace of dictatorship, where people cannot raise their voice in disagreement.

But apart from that, it is impossible to find a home among all the unbelievers in the world where husband and wife are one. And if that is true in your home, as a believer also, you have to say that your home is no different from the home of a non-believer, whichever church you may go to. It's a mystery.

It's the wisdom of God that brings us to that place. And then, once you get there, the next step is the church. The Christian life is a three-story building.

First your personal life, walk with God in holiness, then your family life, and then the ultimate wisdom of God is in the church, where two or three are united together. There Jesus said, I am in the midst. Don't think Jesus is in the midst of every place where just two or three people gather in the name of Jesus.

They must be united. Because Jesus used the word of two of you, agree. And in all these 32 years that I have seen, that we've been building churches in different places, I've seen the devil is smart.

He has always tried to bring conflict between the leaders of a church. Every place I've seen. I'm not talking about other denominations, I'm talking about our churches.

And I'll tell you something, if the devil has not succeeded in CFC Bangalore in 32 years, it's because he has not succeeded in coming between us elders. It's not that we don't disagree. Disagreement is not disunity.

Remember, disagreement is not disunity. Disagreement means we have got a mind which is not perfect. But it's a more wonderful thing when you can disagree and be united.

I tell you, than to agree and be united. So here you have two elders who have slightly different views on the tribulation, or different views on wearing ornaments, or different views on, you know, keeping Sunday, or not playing games on Sunday, or not going for picnics on Sunday, or whatever, not eating meat on Fridays, or whatever it is, or celebrating Christmas, whether you should have a Christmas tree or not. And if such people can be one, that's a greater thing than if they agree together and are one.

I asked the Lord once, many, many years ago, Lord, why didn't you just, there are already 31,000 verses in the Bible, just another 5 or 10 verses, and solve many problems in Christianity. For example, there is no such thing as infant baptism. It must be believer's baptism.

That would have solved the infant baptism problem permanently. Or everybody must speak in tongues, or everybody need not speak in tongues. One sentence would have solved that problem permanently.

Or nobody should put up Christmas trees, or it is okay, it doesn't matter. One sentence would have solved all these problems. Why didn't God put it? You know, just one sentence.

What is there to add 4 or 5 verses to 31,175 verses? That wouldn't have made a big difference. You think God did not know the problems there would be 20 centuries later, believers fighting with each other? Or that Jesus Christ was really a man, though he was God. In one sentence would have solved it.

You know why? Many years ago the Lord showed me that it is when I, I have deliberately left certain things vague. In scripture, to test people's honesty, to see whether they are dishonest in their interpretation of scripture, to force their own view into scripture. And there I find out whether they are dishonest, or whether they are honest.

And secondly, I allow my children to have different opinions on these peripheral things. Peripheral things means unimportant things on the outskirts of Christianity. To test whether they can be one, when they don't see eye to eye with each other.

That solved that problem for me. And therefore I realized that I don't even have to see eye to eye with my wife on some doctrine or some view about anything. I mean, whether America should have invaded Iraq or not.

Supposing you have a different view from your wife, is that going to disturb your unity in the church? It doesn't matter at all. Or you have some disagreement. Disagreement is not disunity.

So I'm not saying to force the other person to have your own view. The wisdom of God is that two people who are so different as Jews and Gentiles, or you, different from another community, can become one with them because of the cross. Through the death of the cross, we become one.

And if you cannot become one, you can be absolutely sure that both of you are not willing to die. And instead of checking up whether the other person is dying or not, just check up on yourself. Whether you're willing to die.

I want to tell you, the way of the cross is the happiest way you can ever live. Many people say, oh, the way of the cross is a very gloomy life. It's not.

That's a lie of the devil. Because the Bible says, if you die with him, you will live with him. The only way you will experience resurrection is by death.

If I don't die, there will be no resurrection. And all Christians who do not choose to die to themselves never experience the resurrection life of Christ, either in their spirits or in their bodies. I talked about healing.

So, it's a very wonderful thing to choose the way of the cross, to choose death to myself. And you can be absolutely sure, I guarantee, if you lift up Jesus from the dead, he will raise you up if you choose to die with Christ. Nobody will be able to harm you.

You know, people say, if you just die to yourself all the time, people will treat you like a doormat. Do you think Jesus was a doormat? No. If you go by the letter of the law and you try to understand the cross with your human mind, then you will have a wrong understanding of it and you'll be like a doormat.

That's not what Jesus was. He didn't go by the letter of the law. For example, he said to people, if somebody slaps you on the right cheek, turn the left cheek.

But you read in the gospels, when they slapped him on one cheek, he did not turn the left cheek. He himself. He said, why did you slap me? I mean, a legalistic man will criticize even Jesus for not preaching, practicing what he preached.

But I find that he did practice what he preached because he is the spirit. When he said, eat my flesh and drink my blood, the words I speak are spirit and life. I'll tell you something, God has written the Bible in such a wonderful way that every legalist will go astray.

I praise God for that. I praise God with all my heart that clever legalists will go astray when they study the Bible. But a man who is seeking to understand the spirit of Christ will never go astray.

He is a happy person. Legalists will be long-faced, serious, morose, gloomy. Those who live by the spirit of the law, they are very happy people.

Stay clear of legalists. Stay clear of people who are trying to run your life by rules. Seek to understand the spirit.

The wisdom of God is in the spirit. It's the spirit of wisdom. See Ephesians chapter 1. One of the prayers Paul prayed for the Ephesians was My prayer is, verse 17, that God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of

glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Wisdom is a spirit. It is a spirit of wisdom. And it's not according to the letter.

Some of the biggest problems in Christendom are when people go by the letter. And in building this church, you know, we find two extremes among Christians. There are people who say, we don't have any leader but Christ.

You remember in Corinth, Paul said, what is this, you fellows? One fellow says, I am of Paul. Another fellow says, I am of Peter. One group says, we appreciate Paul, you know, this clever intellectual preaching, great stuff.

And another group says, no, we like Peter, simple rugged fisherman type of preaching. And the other group says, no, we are not like any of you. We belong to Christ.

Now, out of these three groups, who do you think were the worst? Eh? I'll tell you, those who said we belong to Christ. Because they were such snobs. They looked down at the others and say, hey, you guys are this and you guys are that.

Well, we belong to Christ. As if those people didn't belong to Christ also. You know, we can have that attitude.

Oh, you guys are all Baptists, you guys are Methodists, you guys are Pentecostals, but we belong to? And there can be a spirit there which is the spirit of the devil. Pride. Can you recognize God's people in other groups? I'm very thankful.

I'll tell you, I've met God's people in other groups who are ten times better than some of God's people in CFC. And I have more fellowship with them than with people here. My loyalty is not to CFC, I'll tell you that.

It's to Jesus Christ, the head of the church. So, it's very easy for us to be arrogant towards others. Then you know you haven't understood the spirit of Christ.

The fundamental characteristic of the spirit of Christ is humility. If you've got the spirit of wisdom, you'll be a very, very humble person. And the more wisdom you have, the humbler you'll become.

The less you will think of yourself as important, and the more you will think of other people as important. Those are the people I like to be with. Not those who treat me as important, but those who've got the spirit of Christ, of humility.

Because I know that I can learn a lot from them, even if they are not great scholars. So, I want you to see here, there's one group that says we have no leader except Christ. And then there are other groups who just blindly follow some earthly leader, whether it's a pope or a pastor.

They say our pastor says this. Both are wrong. Both are wrong.

Because in the Bible, it may surprise you to know that in the entire New Testament, no church was led by a pastor. You know that? You read the New Testament and show it to me. Not a single church in the New Testament was led by a pastor.

It was led by elders, plural. Why don't people follow the New Testament? Because they are cleverer than God. Why do we worry about the little things? Because in the Old Testament tabernacle, when Moses did everything according to what Kabban did, the glory of God came.

I want the glory of God upon my life. I want the glory of God in my home. That's why I try to bring up my children according to God's word, not according to what the psychologists teach.

And I wanted to build a church according to God's word. And if God's word said elders, we say elders. It's a very simple thing.

We say it doesn't matter. I know it doesn't matter. It's not a matter of salvation.

But why not do everything the way God commanded? Most churches today have elected leaders. You know, they have pastors and bishops and finally archbishop or metropolitan or something right on top. They are elected.

You never find that in the New Testament. What do we see in the New Testament? Ephesians 4. I want you to see in Ephesians something about the wisdom of God in building the church. It says here that in the church, verse 11 of Ephesians 4, he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.

The word pastor is the same word which Jesus used for good shepherd. I am the good shepherd. Pastor means shepherd.

I hope you know that. And that's not an office for somebody to be a pastor of a church. It's a gift of a ministry.

So in a church, you may not be a full-time worker. You may not be paid. But if you care for others, you are a shepherd.

You are a pastor, a woman, a man who cares for others who are younger to them. You may be 18 years old and you care for all the Sunday school children. You're a pastor to them.

You're a shepherd. And every church needs many pastors. But not just that.

Apostles. Apostles are those who plant churches and who are elders to the elders of churches. Now today, there are a lot of people in the world who call themselves apostles.

How do you know whether it's an apostle or a true apostle? It's very difficult to find out, what is his attitude to money? Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11, he says, we don't take money from others to show that we do God's work in a different way from these other people. That's why Paul didn't take it. Now today we hear a lot of every Christian appreciates the Apostle Paul.

Tell me how many Christians are apostles like the Apostle Paul? You tell me the names of such people. I will go anywhere in the world to meet them who plant churches and don't take any money from them. Like the Apostle Paul.

I would like to meet them. Everybody praises the Apostle Paul but nobody wants to live like him. Paul was the one man in the New Testament who said, follow me as I follow Christ.

It's not just a question of praising him. You need to learn to value what God's word says. We are all apostles.

Prophets. We have multitudes of false prophets today. The true prophets are not the ones who shut their eyes and in some strange funny voice say, thus said the Lord.

No, no, no. Be clear of them. I used to say stay one million miles away from the earth.

I don't say that because the circumference of the earth is only 24 miles. So you can't go one million miles away. So I said, try and stay 12,000 miles away half the circumference of the earth from them.

Don't be fooled by all these false prophets. A true prophet is like it says in 1 Corinthians 14, 3 one who challenges you, rebukes you, encourages you, builds you up. All of them challenges you, corrects you, encourages you, and builds you up.

It's like a surgeon who takes support of your heart condition and then cuts you open, removes the cancer, stitches you up, gives you a sedative, and brings you to recovery and sends you home happy. That is a prophet. Not just one who cuts you open and says, okay, that's enough.

That's a prophet. Apostles, evangelists. Evangelists are not people who hold big crusades and tell people go wherever you like.

They don't bring people to Christ and add them to a local church. Show me the evangelists like that in the world today who bring people to Christ and add them to a local church. Though that is rare.

Very difficult to find. We have some. They don't have big crusades but in personal evangelism they brought others to the church.

So the best must build the church not just bring souls to Christ. A lot of evangelism today is just putting a net into the sea collecting a lot of fish counting the number of fish. Okay, I brought 10,000 fish but there are so many holes in that net fish all escape.

The next evangelist comes with his net full of holes and he gathers 10,000 the same 10,000 usually as I gather 10,000. If you look at the reports that go from India 1,000 million converts in India. What lies? This is nets full of holes.

Shepherds, those who have a care for others I said any of you brothers and sisters young or old can be a shepherd. If you care for those who are younger than you I don't care who you are. And a teacher is not one who just teaches the Bible but like Jesus said teach them to do everything I have commanded you.

A teacher is someone who shows you how you can do what Jesus commanded. And these people are used he goes on to say to build the church. So we recognize people whom God has gifted like that to build the church.

And I want to say one more thing before I move on. Who was the one who gave these gifts? Can you tell? I know it's Jesus. But what is he called there? There's a particular phrase used for him.

He is the one who read it in verse 10 who is the one who gave some it says in verse 7 and he and means it's connected to the previous and he gave some. Who is that? He who what? Are you afraid to read? He who descended. Who is the one who gives the gifts? He who went down.

Do you want the gifts? Learn to go down. The Christian world is full of people who are trying to go up. Even in our churches there are people who want to be elders who want to be leaders.

They'll never be good leaders because they're always wanting to go up. The gifts are given by one who descended. Today people are trying to be apostles and they don't realize the one who gives that gift is the one who descended.

People want to be prophets it's the one who descended who made prophets. It's the one who descended who made shepherds. It's the one who descended who made evangelists.

Go to the one who descended fellowship with him and go down and he'll give you all the gifts you need to build a church. Say like John the Baptist I want to decrease he must increase. I tell you now I was really continuing what I said in the previous days but I want to move on today to the fourth characteristic in the heavenlies Ephesians 6.12 is a place of battle.

The heavenlies is the place of blessing it's a place of power it's a place of wisdom and fourth Ephesians 6.12 is the place of battle. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood our battle is not against flesh and blood but against rulers powers, world forces of darkness in the heavenlies.

Many many centuries ago thousands of years ago the highest of the angels we don't know his name we don't know him people call him Lucifer but that's not his name Lucifer is just a Latin word meaning light bearer which is found in Isaiah 14 and people have used that Latin name as if it's his name we don't know his name I don't think it's important to know his name and that's why God has never shown us his name anyway let's call him Lucifer he was cast down not to the earth not to hell do you know that the devil has never gone to hell and do you know that the devil will never go to hell and these are things which if you know the bible you know what I'm saying is true he was cast down from the heavens to the third heaven which is God's presence to the second heaven which is also called the

heavenlies the first heaven is this universe that we see sun, moon, stars, planets and all the universe beyond that is the second heaven where the devil dwells and beyond that is the third heaven where God almighty dwells and hell right at this moment is in the center of the earth that center of the earth is a place called Hades which is divided into two parts hell and paradise hell is where the unbelievers go and paradise is where Lazarus went and hell is where the rich man went in that story and Jesus also went to the heart of the earth but not to hell but to paradise with the thief on the cross he told him stay with me in paradise but when Jesus ascended from that lower part of the earth it says in Ephesians 4 from the lower part of the earth verse 9 he ascended Ephesians 4, 9 he

descended to the lower parts of the earth Ephesians 4, 8 from there he ascended on high and when he ascended on high he took all those people who were in paradise took them up to heaven so today the believers like Abraham and that Lazarus and all are not in the heart of the earth paradise was moved up and Jesus ascended to the third heaven that's why Paul says now I was caught up to paradise but as Jesus said as Jonah was in the whale's belly so the son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights so we know that Jesus was in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights and he told the thief I'll be in paradise so we know paradise was there but Paul says I was caught up to paradise the third heaven so now we know that paradise is in the third heaven

it's moved and it moved when Jesus ascended so the devil was cast down from the third heaven to the second heaven and he's there so when you pray you're trying to go through the second heaven to the third

heaven that's why you find it so difficult to pray when you're trying to reach to God when you're speaking to people or gossiping to people it's very easy because there's no obstruction how many of you can say it's easier to gossip than to pray I think we all find that because this way there's no obstruction this way there is when we're trying to go up and I have found I've found many times have you noticed this when you try to kneel down and pray you feel sleepy or when you try to kneel down to pray you think of all the hundred and one things you're supposed to do which you've forgotten

to do in fact I'll tell you this if you've forgotten to do something just kneel down to pray suddenly you'll be reminded of all the things that you've forgotten to do I'll tell you honestly it's a trick we can play on the devil I've forgotten a few things to do let me just kneel down to pray everything will come back to your mind but you know when that happens I stop praying I say okay I'm going to stand up I'm going to raise my hands I'm going to praise the Lord there's one thing the devil hates it's praise I'll tell you that he hates it like anything and praise penetrates through and goes into God's because God it says God dwells in the when we praise Him we make a throne for God when you complain you make a throne for who? the devil when you praise God Psalm 22.3 says you make a throne

for God and I'll tell you all of you you're making a throne for God in your house or you're making a throne for the devil you didn't know it but at least you know it now you're making a throne for God in your life or you're making a throne for the devil in your life it all depends on one thing have you learned to praise Him or are you still complaining grumbling about something or the other as somebody did something went wrong I refuse to grumble or complain somebody does something or doesn't do something somebody promised to do something didn't do it somebody disrupted my plan somebody made me late for something I mean this happens very often all over the world on Sunday morning husband and wife are screaming at each other because we've got to go to the meeting on time it's getting late

they yell and scream and complain and grumble and make a throne for the devil and come to the church to do what to praise God what sort of praise are they going to give to God having made a throne for the devil they come with a throne for the devil and say oh Lord we praise you oh Jesus how we love you it's all rubbish I'll tell you something it's good to come on time for the meeting in fact you should you should try your best to do that but it's not always possible the baby's diapers may have to be changed the children may want to go to the toilet you may have a flat tire there could be so many things with small children in a home they can't come to the meeting but don't come to the meeting yelling at each other it's better to be 15 minutes late half an hour late come in peace take my

advice don't make a throne for the devil in your home because don't do it what are you going to gain by that the Bible speaks about the throne of Satan in Revelation 2 speaks about the throne of God in Psalm 22 we enthrone him on our praises so the devil is in the heavenlies and we have to battle with the devil it says we don't wrestle with flesh and blood what is wrestling with flesh and blood complaining against your wife or your husband is wrestling with flesh and blood it's not a physical wrestle it's a verbal wrestle do you use words to wrestle with your husband or wife then you can never fight the devil it says here Ephesians 6, 12 we do not struggle against flesh and blood how many of you can honestly I have finished struggling against human beings I decided that years ago I may

disagree I may express my disagreement strongly I do that I mean many of you who are even elders will tell me in every church that I have very strongly expressed my views to you sometimes when I disagreed but I'll tell you never I can say before God it has never taken away my love for you brothers do you know how it is to love and speak strongly you ask my children how strongly I used to speak to them do you

doubt that I love them Jesus says as many as I love I rebuke we can speak strongly but we don't struggle we don't struggle against flesh and blood never I will never struggle I remember one brother he is not with us now in one place he used to lead one of our churches once upon a time and when he came to Bangalore once for a conference I had to rebuke him quite strongly he said

brother Zach I've never I'm not used to anybody speaking to me like this oh I said I'm sorry I'll never speak to you like that again and I never did I said you can go to hell if you like you can go and ever since that day I have observed his life he's gone further and further and further away from God nobody to correct him it's very sad I can think of more than one brother like that more than one brother I've said to them I won't correct your brother years later they come to me and say brother Zach you're the only one who was a spiritual father to me nobody loved me enough to correct me but I've stopped correcting a number of people because they don't want correction even almighty God stops correcting people if he finds that they get offended but we don't struggle I refuse to struggle

with flesh and blood I've had people who come to my house from other denominations who try to convince me about some doctrine as soon as they get into an argument I know one man came to my house trying to convince me that we should not take medicines when we are sick I said fine if you don't want to take it that's up to you but what are you trying to convince me about that and he was on and on I said listen if you're going to go on that subject I don't have time to talk to you if you want to talk about Jesus and the word of God I'll talk to you but he wouldn't stop I had to finally ask him brother I don't have time for this will you please leave the house I was almost the only man I ever asked to leave my house I said I don't want to struggle with flesh and blood I tried to change the

subject to cricket or Sachin Tendulkar or something no but he went back to healing without medicines I mean if it were cricket we could have been at least united we are on the same side no he went back to healing medicines I said listen I'm trying to avoid strife by switching on to cricket or something like that but you won't you want strife I'm not going to struggle make a decision in your life I found that I had power against the devil when I stopped struggling with human beings Ephesians 6.12 we do not struggle against human beings so that we can have all our energy to fight the devil you know why many of you are not able to conquer the devil because you are using all your energy to fight your husband or your wife or your children or your neighbor or somebody in your office or your

boss if you spend all your energy there how much energy will you have left to fight against the devil pretty close to zero no wonder he overcomes you however he is he makes you spend all your energy fighting with human beings so when it comes to fighting the devil you are so weak I learned through that I saw through that when I read this verse I refuse to fight against flesh and blood I refuse to get into an argument with anybody about anything brother you think I'm a heretic God bless you please go ahead and think that I'm not going to try and prove you wrong I'm not even going to try and prove that let him think all his life I'm a false teacher what does it matter to me let me ask you very simple question which I like to ask people if 10,000 people call you a prophet will you become a

prophet ok if 10,000 people call you a devil will you become a devil then does it matter what they say why are you disturbed if one fellow comes and says something to you he cannot you are going to make yourself a devil if you behave the wrong way make a decision in your life like I did years ago I will disagree with people but I'll express my disagreement in love it may be strong but I'll love them but I will never never struggle with people and when I see this is becoming a conflict change the subject then we can battle in the heavenlies you can either battle on earth or battle in the heavenlies when we think about the Lord

saying come up higher it's a matter of battle also where do you want to fight of this you want to fight your battle on the earth or you want to fight the battle up

in the heavens you know when we had a factory strike this has got very practical applications about 27 years ago I think it was around that time there were 26 years ago there was all the factories in Bangalore were on strike all the government, semi-government factories every one of them I've never seen such a strike in my life in Bangalore so many and it was not one or two days for weeks and it was over a month or month and a half or something like that so many people could not afford to feed their families they sent their families home to their villages it was a most amazing time I don't think any city in India saw something like that and it became a flashpoint once when police firing was there and the big crowds and it was almost as though Bangalore was dynamite with somebody ready to

light it we in our church called for three days three evenings of prayer working days and most of our those who were in factories could not go to work they were sitting at home so we had three evenings of prayer and I said to the people I said see the police can round up all the gundas and the thugs and the people who cause problems what can the police do about the evil spirits who are causing all these problems how do they round them up no way to do it who's going to do that I said that's our job we are the church in Bangalore we are going to do it now there are many churches in Bangalore we are not the only ones but some churches don't believe that you can bind evil spirits ok then they obviously cannot do it then some other churches are so full of infighting they also cannot bind evil

spirits because you got to be united when you fight the devil and then some other churches there's so much of sin in that church that they also can't have any power of evil spirits so you need a church which emphasizes holiness which is united and which believes that we have the authority in Christ to bind the powers of evil and there may be only very few churches like that so those are the only churches not only ours, any church like that can bind the activities of Satan we decided to do that and believe it or not on the last day of that three evenings of air the whole situation in Bangalore changed and I think a few days later all the factories opened which were closed for so many weeks what will what will you say to that ah brother coincidence ok according to your faith be it unto you

I don't believe this coincidence you know what some of the lepers ten lepers were cleansed why didn't the nine come back I think one must have said actually I was getting better a few days ago and I thought ok now it's not really Jesus or any such thing and there's so many sins you know I'm wondering now whether that was really leprosy you know now I see it wasn't I thought it was it's amazing how Christians will pray to God for something and when they get an answer they'll say brother you should go to that doctor that guy is really good or that medicine you pray to God and then give the glory to something human I'm not saying you shouldn't go to doctors I'm not saying you shouldn't use medicines but I pray even over the food I eat because I believe it's the blessing of God upon that food

that makes us strong it's the blessing of God upon medicine it's the blessing of God upon doctors everything that makes us well ultimately it's God so you give the glory to God we don't give the glory to human beings but what I want to say is there's a battle in the heavenlies that you must learn to fight sometimes when your children are in bad habits really bad habits maybe they've grown up teenagers and they've gotten into really bad habits it could be drugs, it could be immorality it could be running after some unconverted girl or boy what do you do? you can say oh well just accept that or you can get together with your wife and bind the activities of Satan there so that your children don't mess up their lives do you do that? do you believe you have the authority to do that?

I'll tell you you've got to stop fighting with each other you've got to stop struggling with flesh and blood a husband and wife who fight with each other will have no authority to fight the devil because they're fighting with each other where do they have the energy to fight the devil? oh you're fighting with your fellow believers you know there are some believers they cannot get along with anybody what sort of believers are they? everything something's wrong with this person something's wrong with that person something's wrong with the other person who's the person with whom nothing is wrong? me this is crazy I've seen believers like that it's like the wife who said my husband thinks there are only two people right in the universe one is God and the other is he himself there's some

people like that you know all this struggle with flesh and blood is an indication of how important we think we are how we think we are right you know for example you know very well that I believe that the church will go through the tribulation before Jesus comes just like a woman has birth pains before the baby is born Jesus said that the beginning of birth pains that's the word he used so we'll go through the tribulation and then the kingdom of God will be born but I know there are believers who don't believe that I've met very fine believers who feel that the church will be taken up before the tribulation so I say to them I'm absolutely convinced I'm right because it's in scripture but I don't argue with them and so that we don't get into a conflict I tell them, brother ok I'm not going

to argue with you supposing you're right let's assume you're right and Christ comes before the tribulation I'll come with you don't worry I won't hang around here and say hey I'm supposed to go through the tribulation I'll come with you I've no problem if I'm wrong in that day to say I was wrong but I was ready for the coming of Christ that's the main thing I don't want to glory in the final day saying my doctrine was right I want to say in the final day I'm ready to meet Jesus face to face my conscience is clear I've tried to build with gold, silver and precious stones maybe one or two points my doctrine was not absolutely right, so what I'm ready to meet the Lord that's the important thing it's much more important to be ready to meet the Lord than to have all your doctrines absolutely

correct it's something like this if you get you're a father and you get two birthday cards from your children one is a small three year old spelling is all wrong in the birthday card took some old paper and wrote dear daddy and the e's turned the other way around it's all crooked but and the other is an older son who's pretty rebellious and also writes perfectly, he buys a card and sends you a wonderful card which card will you appreciate more the one with all the wrong spelling or with a good spirit or the expensive card bought by a rebellious child all perfect, handwriting neatly no it's the same with God he's not going to give you a doctrinal test when you come back he's going to see your spirit was your spirit a spirit of peace blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the

sons and daughters of God there are sons and daughters of God sitting here who will never get into a fight I praise God for them there are not many but there are a few will you be surprised if I tell you that for 32 years whether Ian and I have never had a fight we have disagreed many times we probably disagree even now on some things it doesn't matter it may surprise you to know that he celebrates Christmas and I don't he has a Christmas tree in his house you're shocked I went there and I don't can two such people be one who is more spiritual you may have your opinion but you may get a surprise when the Lord comes it's got nothing to do with whether you celebrate Christmas or not it's got to do with humility and I have no problem at all recognizing that someone who has a Christmas tree

and celebrates Christmas could be way ahead of me spiritually in the kingdom of God I have no problem believing that because it's not got to do with whether this doctrine is all correct it's got to do with humility I

find so many believers arguing about wearing ornaments I don't wear it, my wife doesn't wear it but that's not the way I would judge a person spiritually it's humility for some people the three secrets of the Christian life are don't wear ornaments don't wear ornaments for some people it's don't celebrate Christmas don't celebrate Christmas for me it is humility, humility, humility you can have your choice brothers and sisters brothers and sisters so many struggles among brothers and sisters are for what? for all these silly little things that sap your energy take away your

energy to fight the devil maybe you are right maybe you will discover in eternity that we shouldn't have worn ornaments that we shouldn't have had Christmas trees so what? you have messed up your whole life even though you were right because you struggled and never fought the devil I'll tell you honestly I believe that the church will go through tribulation but I have no problem if Jesus comes before the tribulation, I say fine I want to live in humility and I want to fight the devil all my life and not just say that I was right in my doctrine please understand make a decision in your life that you will never fight with flesh and blood, your battle must be against the devil in the heavenly places and the battle against the devil has to be in your personal life first and then in your home

have you noticed the section Ephesians 6.12 says fight against the devil and put on all this armor but do you know the section that comes immediately before that? what is the section that comes immediately? let me read to you quick succession from Ephesians 5.22 onwards wives, be subject to your husbands 23 husband, 25, husbands love your wives, chapter 6 verse 1, children obey your parents chapter 6 verse 4, fathers don't provoke your children, bring them up in the instruction of the Lord, 5 in those days like in many homes in India there were servants in the house, servants be obedient to your masters, and masters verse 9, treat your servants well at home, this is all about the home husbands, wives, children, parents servants, masters, mistresses now, finally, in your home, what should

you do? be strong fight against the devil, where is this fight? in your home and you know how true that is if you win the battle at home, you can win it in the church are you winning the battle at home? can you say the devil doesn't have a foothold in my home? that's how our home should be when your children are falling into these bad habits fight the devil, you remember that story of how a lion David was looking after the sheep we read in 1 Samuel 17, and a lion came and took away the lamb and David says, I went and fought with whom? with the lamb or the lion? when the devil comes and takes away your child, whom do you fight with? the lamb no wonder, you know supposing the lion took away the lamb and the devil, David went and told the lamb, I told you, you shouldn't have gone that way

you should have stayed here, by the time he's finished the lecture, the lamb is fully inside the lion's stomach and you go to your child, and I told you so many times, you shouldn't do this, and you shouldn't keep such friends, and you shouldn't go here, I told you to come back home early, and you don't listen, I told you to study properly, and this that and the other, by the time you have finished your lecture brother, the devil has followed up your child when are we going to get wisdom? how many of you believe that you can fight the devil and deliver the lamb from the mouth of the lion?

I believe it with all my heart do you think my four boys have not been attacked by the devil? do you really believe the devil is such a fool? to leave my family alone? I haven't talked about it but the devil has attacked me, he has attacked my wife, he has attacked my children, with sickness and so many things through the years but my wife and I decided we are going to fight the devil he is not going to get an inch in my home, in my children or in any area yes, we did correct our children, but we fought the devil first, learn to fight the devil in your home if you have an uncontrollable wife whose anger is absolutely uncontrollable,

she yells and screams you are not going to win the battle by yelling and screaming back, perhaps you should get alone in some corner and deliver her from the mouth of the lion, from the devil there is a battle, the christian life is a battle, it is not a picnic, I have never believed the christian life is a picnic I am going to have a picnic when I go to heaven for all eternity but till then it is battle I have been greatly challenged by William Booth towards the end of his life, he was 85 or 87 or something, he said as long as the devil is exploiting women and children I am going to fight, I am going to fight, I am going to fight and that is the way I say Lord if I ever get to the age of 87 that is what I am going to say, I am going to fight, I am going to fight I am going to fight the devil as long as he is exploiting and making believers slaves and exploiting women, exploiting children, exploiting believers, pastors exploiting poor people, I am going to fight, I am going to fight, I am going to fight God needs people who will fight a battle against the devil, stop fighting with your wife stop fighting with your children and you children, stop fighting with your parents stop fighting with your neighbors stop fighting with other believers in the church Stop gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, complaining.

God is on the throne. Let's stand in the heavenlies and fight the battle that is going on there. God wants people who will fight this battle in the heavenlies.

A place of blessing, a place of power, a place of wisdom, a place of battle. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to be faithful and wise in the days in which we live, as we approach the end of time.

Help us to live before your face, to glorify you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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