

THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

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IT WAS REALLY ENCOURAGING TO BE HERE LAST WEEK AND TO SEE ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE GATHERED HERE TO SOMEWHAT CELEBRATE WHAT WE CALL A WAR. MR. ARMSTRONG'S MESSAGE SAID THAT THERE IS A WAR; WE ARE AT WAR. YOU KNOW, IF WE ARE AT WAR, THEN WE MUST BE SOLDIERS. IF WE ARE SOLDIERS, WE HAVE TO BE GOOD SOLDIERS. IF WE ARE GOOD SOLDIERS WE HAVE TO BE CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

I WONDER IF REALLY EVERYONE OF US HERE REALIZES THAT WE HAVE TO FIGHT THIS WAR AS CHRISTIANS. WE HAVE TO BE GOOD SOLDIERS AND WE HAVE TO FIGHT LIKE SOLDIERS DO. IN MATTHEW 11 THERE IS AN INTERESTING STATEMENT WHICH IS OFTENTIMES MISUNDERSTOOD. HERE CHRIST SPOKE ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTIST, IN VERSE 12 HE SAYS, "FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL NOW THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS SUFFERED VIOLENCE, AND MEN OF VIOLENCE TAKE IT BY FORCE."

NOW WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? I'M SURE THAT SOME OF YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, PERHAPS SOME OF YOU ARE QUITE CLEAR ON THE SUBJECT. YOU SEE, GOD WANTS US TO BE VIOLENT AND TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN VIOLENCE. NOW THE WORD "VIOLENCE" IS NOT WHAT YOU AND I THINK IN THE SENSE OF DESTRUCTION WAY. HERE VIOLENCE MEANS FULL OF ZEAL, EARNESTNESS, FORCE, DETERMINATION. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ONLY FOR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE DETERMINED, EARNEST, WILLING TO FIGHT AND DIE IF NEED BE TO ENTER. AND ONLY PEOPLE WITH THAT CALIBER WILL BE ABLE TO ENTER. THAT'S THE VIOLENCE CHRIST IS TALKING ABOUT HERE.

IF WE HAVE TO BE EARNEST, DETERMINED, ZEALOUS, OVERCOMING OUR PROBLEMS, IT REALLY TAKES FIGHTING. IN EVERY PROFESSION WE HAVE — WHETHER YOU'RE A MECHANIC, OR A LAWYER, OR A TYPIST, WHATEVER IT IS — THERE'S ALWAYS THE GOOD, THE MEDIOCRE AND THE POOR. NOW WE HAVE TO BE THE BEST. IN GOD'S CHURCH AND IN GOD'S WORK, WE CAN'T AFFORD BEING MEDIOCRE. WE HAVE TO BE THE BEST; WE HAVE TO EXCEL. IF WE ARE AT WAR — AND WE ARE AT WAR — THEN WE HAVE TO BE EXCELLENT SOLDIERS. EXCEL IN HONESTY, EXCEL IN LOVE, EXCEL IN COURAGE, AND EXCEL IN ZEAL.

YOU KNOW, CHRIST SET AN EXAMPLE FOR US AS TO HOW TO FIGHT. IN MATTHEW 10 HE TOLD US THAT DESPITE WHAT THE WORLD THINKS HE

CAME TO BRING WAR. MATTHEW 10:34, HE SAYS, "DO NOT THINK I HAVE COME TO BRING PEACE ON EARTH." AGAIN, THIS IS THE SORT OF CHRIST PEOPLE PREACH AND SAY WELL, CHRIST CAME JUST WITH A PEACEFUL MESSAGE. IT IS A PEACEFUL MESSAGE BUT IT TAKES FIGHTING AND WAR TO MAKE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THAT PEACEFUL MESSAGE.

HE SAYS, "DO NOT THINK THAT I CAME TO BRING PEACE ON EARTH; I HAVE NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT A SWORD. [VERSE 35] FOR I HAVE COME TO SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; AND A MAN'S FOES WILL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD."

THERE IT IS, FIGHT AGAIN. AND CHRIST SAYS, "HE WHO LOVES HIS FATHER AND MOTHER MORE THAN ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME. HE WHO LOVES HIS SON OR DAUGHTER MORE THAN ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME AND HE WHO DOES NOT TAKE HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME."

AS YOU CAN SEE, BRETHERN, THE WORLD CONFUSES CHRIST'S MEEKNESS WITH THE WORD "WEAKNESS". IN GOD'S CHURCH WE HAVE NO EXCUSE FOR THAT. IN GOD'S CHURCH WE HAVE LEARNED TO BE MEEK, WE SHOULD BE HUMBLE, BUT NEVER WEAK. WE HAVE TO BE MEEK SOLDIERS BUT NOT WEAK SOLDIERS.

WOULD YOU REALLY THINK THAT CHRIST HAD AN EASY TIME? THAT EVERYTHING WAS GOOD AROUND HIM AND EASY FOR HIM? YOU KNOW BETTER. WOULD YOU THINK THAT CHRIST SPOKE IN A WEAK VOICE? LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING THAT HE SAID. AND TRY TO SAY WHAT HE SAID IN A WEAK VOICE. CHRIST SET THE EXAMPLE FOR US TO DEFEND WHAT IS RIGHT, TO FIGHT FOR WHAT IS RIGHT AND TO SAY EXACTLY WHAT WE SHOULD SAY AS GOD INSPIRES US TO SAY. HE WAS TALKING TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES WHO WERE POWERFUL PEOPLE AT THAT TIME. THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES AND SADUCEES WERE STRONG GROUPS OF PEOPLE. CHRIST WASN'T AFRAID OF THEM. HE SPOKE TO THEM AND TOLD THEM WHO THEY WERE AND WHAT THEY WERE.

IN MATTHEW 23:15 HE SAYS, "WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES!" THAT'S AN AWFULLY STRONG STATEMENT. YOU CAN'T JUST SAY "HYPOCRITES" IN A WEAK WAY, YOU HAVE TO REALLY

SHOUT AT THEM AND SHOW THEM WHO THEY ARE.

AGAIN IN VERSE 16 HE SAYS, "WOE TO YOU, BLIND GUIDES," AND THEN HE EXPLAINS WHY. VERSE 23, "WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES! FOR YOU TITHE...", AND THEN IT GOES ON TO EXPLAIN ABOUT TITHING, HOW HYPOCRITICAL THEY WERE.

THEN AGAIN, VERSE 25 SAYS, "WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES! FOR YOU CLEANSE THE OUTSIDE..." AND NOT INSIDE. THOSE ARE STRONG WORDS, HE'S TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO WERE ACTUALLY IN POWER, HE WASN'T AFRAID, WAS HE? HE WAS FIGHTING, NOT WITH THE SWORD BUT WITH GOD'S WORD.

AND IT GOES ON AGAIN, VERSE 27, AND LOOK AT THIS ONE. HE SAYS, "WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES! FOR YOU ARE LIKE WHITE-WASHED TOMBS, WHICH OUTWARDLY APPEAR BEAUTIFUL, BUT WITHIN THEY ARE FULL OF DEAD MEN'S BONES AND ALL UNCLEANLINESS." VERSE 33, LOOK HOW THIS ONE IS STRONG, HE SAYS, "YOU SERPENTS, YOU BROOD OF VIPERS, HOW ARE YOU TO ESCAPE AT BEING SENTENCED TO HELL?"

WE DON'T THINK OF HIM THIS WAY DO WE? WE SHOULD THINK OF CHRIST AS A MANNER OF MEEK BECAUSE WE KNOW BETTER IN GOD'S CHURCH, BUT THE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD THINK THAT CHRIST WAS WEAK. THEY CONFUSE, AS I MENTIONED A MOMENT AGO, MEEKNESS WITH WEAKNESS. YOU HAVE TO HAVE LOTS OF POWER TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK THE WAY HE DOES HERE, LOTS OF COURAGE, ESPECIALLY TO STAND UP FOR WHAT YOU KNOW IS TRUE.

THEN WAS CHRIST A MAN OF WAR? YES, HE FOUGHT AGAINST EVIL, HE FOUGHT AGAINST SIN, HE FOUGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION. IF YOU CALL THAT A MAN OF WAR, HE WAS A MAN OF WAR. IN GOD'S CHURCH TODAY WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST EVIL, WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST SIN, WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION. IF YOU CALL THAT A MAN OF WAR, THEN WE ARE MEN OF WAR. THEREFORE WE ARE CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE WITH WHAT CHRIST SAID AS FAR AS THE WORLD IS CONCERNED AND AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED. HE CAME INTO THE WORLD TO FIGHT. BECAUSE THE WORLD IS IN SINFUL WAY. BUT FOR US HE CAME TO BRING PEACE. IF YOU WERE CALLED OF GOD TODAY, IF YOU ARE OF GOD, CHRIST CAME TO GIVE YOU PEACE. IF YOU ARE IN THE WORLD, NOT OF CHRIST, THEN CHRIST CAME TO BRING YOU WAR. NOW DO YOU GET THE POINT?

LOOK AT JOHN 14 WHERE HE SPEAKS TO HIS

OWN DISCIPLES AND TELLS THEM EXACTLY WHAT I SAID A MOMENT AGO. IN VERSE 27, HE SAYS, "PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU. WHAT DOES THE WORLD GIVE YOU?" AND THEN HE SAID, "LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET THEM BE AFRAID."

SO AS YOU CAN SEE, CHRIST DID COME WITH A MESSAGE WHICH THE WORLD DID NOT LIKE, AND STILL DOESN'T. CHRIST CAME TO FIGHT AGAINST SIN AND THE WORLD WILL FIGHT AGAINST HIM. HE CAME AT THE SAME TIME TO BRING US PEACE. IN A WORLD OF TURMOIL AND FIGHTS, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, YOU, BRETHREN, STILL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO HAVE PEACE OF MIND, IF YOU DON'T HAVE PEACE OF MIND, IF I DON'T HAVE PEACE OF MIND THEN WE'RE NOT GOOD CHRISTIANS; THEN WERE NOT GOOD SOLDIERS.

THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN HAVE THE FIGHT THAT CHRIST WANTS US TO HAVE, AND RETAIN THE PEACE OF MIND IS TO BE AS MEEK AS CHRIST AND LOVING AS HE AND FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS. THAT'S WHY I SAID, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS WE HAVE TO HAVE PEACE OF MIND. BUT YOU SEE BRETHREN, SOME OF US HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD THIS FIGHT. SOME OF US WANT TO FIGHT AGAINST A MAN, RATHER THAN AGAINST A PRINCIPLE, RATHER THAN THE EVIL. DON'T EVER HATE ANY MAN. I DON'T CARE WHO IT IS. BUT HATE HIS WAYS, HIS SINFUL WAYS. BECAUSE THE MOMENT YOU HATE THE MAN THEN YOU ARE FIGHTING LIKE THE WORLD FIGHTS, THEN YOU WILL NOT HAVE A PEACE OF MIND.

YOU HAVE TO LOVE EVERYONE BUT YOU HAVE TO HATE THEIR SINFUL WAYS. IN MATTHEW 5, THAT'S WHAT CHRIST SAID. THE SAME CHRIST WHO TOLD THE PHARISEES, "VIPERS! HYPOCRITES!" — THE SAME CHRIST TELLS YOU, MATTHEW 5:43, "YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AND HATE YOUR ENEMY." THIS WAS NOT IN CHRIST'S MIND, IT HAS NEVER BEEN, THE CARNALLY MINDED COULD NOT UNDERSTAND OTHERWISE BUT YOU AND I SHOULD.

VERSE 44, HE SAID, "BUT I SAY TO YOU, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES." ENEMIES ARE THE PEOPLE IN THE COURT IN LOS ANGELES, AND IT IS ALSO THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO DESTROY THIS BEAUTIFUL BUILDING. YOU WILL HATE WHAT THEY DO BUT CHRIST SAYS YOU WILL LOVE THEM. IT'S AWFULLY DIFFICULT ISN'T IT? "AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU, SO THAT YOU MAY BE SONS OF YOUR FATHER."

THEN HE SHOWS HOW JUST GOD IS FOR GOD MAKES THE SUN RISE ON THE EVIL AND ON THE GOOD AND SO FORTH. YOU SEE, THERE IS THE SECRET FOR YOU AND FOR ME TO HAVE THAT PEACE OF MIND. IF YOU HATE SOMEONE YOU WILL

NEVER HAVE PEACE OF MIND. YOU WILL NEVER BE A GOOD SOLDIER. YOUR FIGHTS, OR YOUR WAR WILL BE LOST BEFORE YOU EVEN BEGIN. BUT IF YOU DO LOVE EVERYONE AS CHRIST SAID, AND FIGHT AGAINST THEIR WAYS, EVIL WAYS, THEN YOU WILL HAVE THAT PEACE OF MIND.

AS CHRISTIANS, BRETHREN, WE HAVE TO BE SOLDIERS. EVERY INSTANT WE HAVE TO FIGHT. FIGHT AGAINST OURSELVES, AGAINST OUR NATURE, AGAINST OUR CARNAL TENDENCIES. YOU KNOW, A FEW WEEKS AGO, A STUDENT CAME TO ME, I THINK IT'S VERY INTERESTING. STUDENTS NEED SOMETHING AND COME WITH WONDERFUL IDEAS. HE CAME TO ME AND HE SAID, I HATE MYSELF. WELL, I SAID, WHAT'S WRONG? HE SAID, WELL MR. ARMSTRONG SAID SO, WE HAVE TO HATE OURSELVES. I SAID, NOW WAIT A MOMENT, I READ IT, I KNOW WHAT HE SAYS BUT IF YOU HATE YOURSELF, YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE OUT ON EVERYTHING.

IN MATTHEW CHAPTER 22, I SHOWED HIM WHAT CHRIST SAID. IT'S INTERESTING. WHEN THEY ASKED HIM WHAT WERE THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS, AFTER HE TOLD THEM THE FIRST COMMANDMENT, HE SAYS, VERSE 39, "AND THE SECOND IS LIKE IT, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." I SAID, NOW WAIT A MOMENT, IF YOU HATE YOURSELF THEN YOU'RE GOING TO HATE YOUR NEIGHBOR TOO, ISN'T THAT TRUE? HE SAYS, I GUESS THAT'S TRUE. THERE IT IS, SOMETIMES WE JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND, CHRIST DIDN'T SAY TO HATE YOURSELF, HE SAID HATE YOUR EVIL WAYS, HATE YOUR CARNAL WAYS OF DOING THINGS, YES, BUT LOVE YOURSELF, BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR THAT MUCH, OTHERWISE YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.

I DON'T MEAN LOVING YOURSELF MEANS THAT YOU HAVE TO JUST DO WHAT YOU WANT, IT ISN'T THAT AT ALL. BUT IF CHRIST DIED FOR YOU — AND HE DIED FOR YOU — THEN IN HIS EYES YOU ARE WORTH SOMETHING. SO PLEASE UNDERSTAND AGAIN ABOUT HATING SOMEONE AND HATING SOMEONE'S WAYS. THIS COULD ALSO APPLY TO YOU AS YOU CAN SEE. BUT AS CHRISTIANS WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST OURSELVES, WE HAVE TO HATE THAT PART OF OUR NATURE WHICH MAKES US FALL OR SIN OR GOSSIP OR DESTROY AS YOU HEARD. THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE TO HATE. YOU CAN ONLY HATE THAT BY ACTUALLY TRYING TO BE MORE LOVING AND MEEK — BUT NOT WEAKER.

THEN AS CHRISTIANS WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST THE WORLD AND AGAINST THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE WORLD. BUT AGAIN BRETHREN, DON'T HATE THE WORLD. HATE THE WAYS OF THE WORLD BUT NOT THE WORLD. IN I JOHN 2, JUST READING THE WHOLE CONTEXT YOU WILL SEE WHAT CHRIST SAID AGAIN THROUGH JOHN. I JOHN

2:15, HE SAYS, DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD. YOU SEE, BUT IF YOU GET INTO THE CONTEXT, YOU WILL KNOW HE'S TALKING ABOUT THE WAYS OF THE WORLD BECAUSE IN THE END IT SAYS THAT.

HE SAYS, LOOK, LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NOR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD. IF ANYONE LOVE THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM, FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD, IT'S CUSTOMS, ITS TRADITIONS, ITS PAGAN RELIGIONS, THE LUST OF THE FLESH, THE LUST OF THE EYES, THE PRIDE OF LIFE, IS NOT OF THE FATHER. THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO HATE; YOU HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST IT.

"AND THE WORLD PASSES AWAY," HE SAYS IN VERSE 17," AND THE LUST OF IT; BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD ABIDES FOR EVER." SO YOU SEE, WE HAVE TO FIGHT AS CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS AGAINST OURSELVES, WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST THE WORLD. BUT WHILE FIGHTING AGAINST OURSELVES WE DON'T HATE OURSELVES. WHILE FIGHTING AGAINST THE WORLD WE DON'T HATE THE PEOPLE, WE HATE THE WAYS.

THEN, FINALLY, AS FAR AS THE FIGHT IS CONCERNED, WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST SATAN. BECAUSE SATAN STANDS FOR LIES, FOR WHAT'S EVIL. HOW DO YOU FIGHT AGAINST SATAN? AGAIN, YOU SEE, WE IN GOD'S CHURCH, WE SHOULD LEARN THE VERY PRINCIPLES OF HOW TO FIGHT AGAINST OURSELVES, AGAINST THE WORLD, AGAINST SATAN.

IN JAMES 4, CHRIST TELLS US HOW TO FIGHT AGAINST SATAN, THIS IS THE ONLY WAY, THERE ARE NO OTHER WAYS, BRETHREN. JAMES 4:6, "BUT HE GIVES MORE GRACE; THEREFORE IT SAYS, GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD BUT GIVES THE GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

NOW WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS COMING JUST BEFORE HE TELLS YOU HOW TO FIGHT SATAN? THE FIRST THING YOU SHOULD DO IS YOU HAVE TO BE HUMBLE, YOU HAVE TO BE MEEK. THEN HE SAYS, SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD. YES, YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO SAY YES TO GOD. AS I MENTIONED A FEW WEEKS AGO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S ORDER TO OBEY HIM. IF GOD SAYS SOMETHING YOU DO IT. YOU SUBMIT YOURSELF TO HIM.

VERSE 7 AGAIN SAYS, "RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU." HOW DO YOU RESIST THE DEVIL? VERSE 8 EXPLAINS TO "DRAW NEAR TO GOD." HOW DO YOU GET CLOSER TO GOD? GET ON YOUR KNEES, YOU WILL BE SURPRISED HOW CLOSE YOU CAN GET TO GOD. PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO JUST SEARCH FOR GOD SOMEWHERE ELSE, THE SOONER YOU GET ON YOUR KNEES THE CLOSER YOU GET TO GOD. YOU CAN PRAY, YOU CAN FAST, YOU CAN ASK, BUT ALWAYS SUBMITTING YOURSELF

TO HIM. THAT'S HOW YOU CAN FIGHT AGAINST THE DEVIL. AS YOU SEE IT'S A CONTINUOUS FIGHT. SOME OF US IN GOD'S CHURCH ARE TOO WEAK, WE AREN'T MEEK ENOUGH BUT WE ARE WEAK ENOUGH. I'M AFRAID SOME OF US IN GOD'S CHURCH HAVE BECOME SO LUKEWARM, JUST DRAG ALONG IN LIFE, AND WE HAVE LOST THE ZEAL, THE EARNESTNESS, THE FIRST LOVE CHRIST SPEAKS OF IN HIS BIBLE. HE SAYS THAT WE ALWAYS GET CLOSE TO HIM AND PUT HIM FIRST. WE HAVE LOST THAT.

IT TAKES FIGHTING, BRETHREN, TO BE A CHRISTIAN. IT TAKES FIGHTING TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER. IT TAKES FIGHTING TO FIGHT. IT TAKES COURAGE TO FIGHT AGAINST THE WORLD, AGAINST SIN, AGAINST SATAN, AGAINST YOUR NATURE. AND IF YOU ARE A COWARD, YOU WON'T MAKE GOD'S KINGDOM.

IN REVELATION CHAPTER 21, HERE IS WHAT GOD SAYS. SPEAKING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN VERSE 7, "HE WHO CONQUERS SHALL HAVE THIS HERITAGE, AND I WILL BE HIS GOD AND HE SHALL BE MY SON. IF VERSE 8, "BUT, AS FOR THE COWARDLY, THE FAITHLESS...THE MURDERERS...FORNICATORS," AND SO FORTH, THEIR LOT SHOULD BE THE LAKE OF FIRE.

NOW WHY DO YOU THINK GOD PUT THAT WORD THERE? WHY THE COWARDLY? THE WORD IS "COWARDLY OF" — CHECK IT. I DON'T CARE WHAT THE KING JAMES VERSION COULD SAY, THE WORD IS COWARDLY: THE ONES WHO DON'T HAVE ENOUGH DETERMINATION AND ZEAL, GOD SAYS IF YOU ARE A COWARD YOU WON'T MAKE THE KINGDOM.

ARE YOU BEGINNING TO SEE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER, A CHRISTIAN SOLDIER? YOU HEARD IN THE SERMONETTE ABOUT THE POVERTY OF THE THIRD WORLD. YOU HEARD WHAT IT MEANS IN MR. ARMSTRONG'S MESSAGE, A WORLD WHICH IS TORN WITH WARS AND WAR THAT COULD COME YET. IN THE WORLD SOMEHOW PEOPLE WANT TO BE HEROS, GREAT HEROS, BIG HEROS. GOD DOESN'T WANT YOU TO BE A GREAT HERO. GOD WANTS YOU TO DO YOUR JOB DAILY. IN HIS EYES THAT'S MUCH GREATER THAN TO BE A GREAT HERO ONCE.

WHAT DOES THE SOLDIER DO IN THE WORLD? HE DOES SOMETHING BIG, HE GETS KILLED, PEOPLE JUST CELEBRATE HIS NAME. THEN A WHILE AFTER HE IS DEAD HIS NAME IS FORGOTTEN. THAT'S A HERO IN THE WORLD. BUT TO BE A HERO IN GOD'S SIGHT IS TO FIGHT YOUR DAILY BATTLES AS A GOOD CHRISTIAN, THEN YOUR DEEDS, YOUR ACTS OF BEING HERO, BRING ABOUT AN ETERNAL REWARD.

YOU SEE, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER HOW

LITTLE YOU HAVE OR HOW LITTLE YOU THINK YOUR FIGHTS ARE. WHAT MATTERS IS HOW WELL YOU FIGHT WITH WHAT YOU HAVE.

IN MATTHEW CHAPTER 25, THAT'S WHAT CHRIST TOLD IN A PARABLE HE GAVE. MATTHEW 25:14, HE SAYS, "FOR IT WILL BE AS WHEN A MAN GOING ON A JOURNEY [THAT'S CHRIST] CALLED HIS SERVANTS, AND TRUSTED THEM HIS PROPERTY; TO ONE HE GAVE FIVE TALENTS, TO ANOTHER TWO, TO ANOTHER ONE, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY."

NOW THERE'S YOUR SECRET. DON'T EVER COMPARE YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE ELSE, BRETHREN. IN THE FIGHT WE HAVE, IN THE BATTLE AS A CHRISTIAN, DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE ELSE BECAUSE YOU HAVE RECEIVED JUST WHAT YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO YOUR FIGHTING. BUT THEN CONTINUE, WHAT HAPPENS? THE ONE WHO HAD FIVE TALENTS, MADE FIVE TALENTS MORE. WHAT DID CHRIST TELL HIM?

VERSE 21, HE SAYS, "WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A LITTLE, I WILL SET YOU OVER MUCH." THERE IS YOUR SECRET. YOU DON'T GET TO BE A BIG HERO. IF YOU CAN BE A CONQUEROR, AN OVERCOMER OVER A LITTLE, THEN YOU WILL RECEIVE MUCH IN THE KINGDOM. NOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ONE WITH TWO? HE DIDN'T MAKE AS MUCH AS FIVE DID HE? NO, HE DID. HE ONLY HAD TWO, HE MADE TWO.

VERSE 23, GOD TOLD HIM, WELL DONE, YOU FAITHFUL SERVANT, EXACTLY THE SAME PROMISE. YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A LITTLE, I WILL SET YOU OVER MUCH. DO YOU GET THE POINT? WHEN YOU LOOK AROUND, IF SOMEBODY IS DOING GREAT, FINE. BUT YOU CAN ALSO BE DOING AS GREAT IF YOU'RE USING EVERYTHING YOU HAVE. IF YOU MULTIPLY TWICE OR FIVE TIMES, OR TEN TIMES, IT ALL DEPENDS ON IF YOU ARE USING EVERYTHING YOU HAVE. AND THAT'S WHAT GOD WANTS US TO DO. THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS US TO BE, SOLDIERS TO FIGHT WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS AND GET THE WORK DONE.

ONE OF THE FIRST TIMES I HEARD MR. ARMSTRONG MENTION A WORD, AN EXPRESSION RATHER, WAS BACK IN 1955. I WAS QUITE INTERESTED BECAUSE IT JUST RANG IN MY EARS. HE SAID, "GET TO THE TRUNK OF THE TREE." THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. I HAD NEVER HEARD THAT EXPRESSION BEFORE. THEN THROUGHOUT THE YEARS I HEARD HIM SPEAK AND MENTION EVERY SO OFTEN, GET TO THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. WE HAD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES, OR DISCUSSIONS SOMETIMES, OR THE BIBLE STUDIES, OR THE BIBLE QUESTIONS, AND IT'S ALWAYS THE TRUNK OF THE TREE.

LATER ON I, MYSELF, MADE SOME SERMONS, GAVE SERMONS ON THE SUBJECT AND YOU KNOW IF YOU REALLY KEEP IN MIND THE TRUNK OF THE TREE, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE SUCCESSFUL AND BE AN OVERCOMER BECAUSE YOU ARE REALLY INTERESTED IN WHAT COUNTS. EVERYONE WHO HAS LEFT GOD'S CHURCH TODAY HAS NOT STUCK TO THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. IT'S ALWAYS LITTLE THINGS HERE AND THERE; BIG IN THEIR EYES BUT LITTLE IN GOD'S EYES.

***** (MISSING A PORTION HERE
IN THE ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT) *****

...FOUNDATION AND THERE IS THE RAMIFICATION. FOR INSTANCE, CHRIST WILL RETURN, THAT IS THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. IF ALL I'M INTERESTED IN I KNOW THAT CHRIST WILL COME IN DUE TIME, THE BEST TIME, THEN THAT'S THE TRUNK OF THE TREE; I KEEP CLOSE TO IT. BUT IF I START SAYING "WHEN," AND SO FORTH, AND I'M ALL CONFUSED, THAT BECOMES IDLE DISCUSSION AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED.

LIKewise, ANOTHER EXAMPLE ON THE SUBJECT. KNOW THAT THE CHURCH WILL BE TAKEN TO A PLACE OF SAFETY. THIS I KNOW, THAT'S THE TRUNK. BUT WHERE THE PLACE IS I DON'T KNOW AND I DON'T CARE, BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE YOUR PROBLEMS BEGINS; THE SUPPOSITION OR CONJECTURE OR FIGHTS. IF YOU GO BACK AND SEE THE PEOPLE WHO LEFT THE CHURCH, THEY LEFT OVER THINGS WHICH WERE NOT THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. THAT'S WHY I SAY, IF WE HAVE JUST COME BACK, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, GET TO THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. THEN I THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO SOLVE MOST OF OUR PROBLEMS AND HAVE THE PEACE OF MIND THAT CHRIST WANTS US TO HAVE.

ALL OF GOD'S MEN IN THE BIBLE WERE SOLDIERS. ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE WERE COURAGEOUS PEOPLE. ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO FIGHT. GOD WANTS US TO FIGHT. THEY WERE NOT WEAK PEOPLE. THEY WERE NOT AFRAID TO SPEAK WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO SAY. I WON'T HAVE TIME, BUT SOMETIMES JUST TAKE NOTE AND READ THE LIFE OF MOSES. SEE THE WAY MOSES TALKED TO PHARAOH, THE KING OF EGYPT. DO YOU THINK IT TOOK COURAGE TO STAND BEFORE THE KING OF EGYPT AND TELL HIM, LOOK LET MY PEOPLE GO OR IT'S GOING TO BE THIS OR THAT, WHEN YOU KNOW THAT THE KING COULD JUST ABOUT KILL YOU? IN FACT, THE KING TOLD HIM THE LAST TIME, THAT'S ALL YOU'RE GOING TO GET FROM ME, MOSES, GET OUT. BECAUSE IF YOU EVER COME BACK YOU WON'T BE ALIVE, MOSES SAID OKAY, JUST THE WAY YOU WANT IT, THAT TAKES COURAGE.

ALSO, LOOK AT THE SAME MOSES AGAIN IN EXODUS 33, WHEN MOSES STOOD BEFORE GOD AND

THE PEOPLE. HE SAID, NO, DON'T STRIKE THE PEOPLE, GOD. THAT'S THE SPIRIT GOD WANTS US TO HAVE. HE WAS DOING IT FOR A CAUSE, FOR A PURPOSE. HE WASN'T AFRAID TO LOSE HIS LIFE, HOW ABOUT JACOB? LET'S TURN TO GENESIS 32 AND LOOK AT THE TYPE OF MAN JACOB WAS. YOU CAN SEE PERHAPS WHY HE HAS BEEN OUR ANCESTOR, VERSE 24, "AND JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE; AND A MAN WRESTLED WITH HIM UNTIL THE BREAKING OF DAY."

NOW DO YOU THINK IT'S REALLY EASY TO WRESTLE ALL NIGHT? DON'T YOU THINK IT TAKES SOME EFFORT, SOME ENERGY, SOME DETERMINATION, SOME REAL EAGERNESS TO DO SO? ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE FIGHTING AGAINST A HIGHER POWER THAN YOU?

VERSE 25, "WHEN THE MAN SAW THAT HE DID NOT PREVAIL AGAINST JACOB, HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF HIS THIGH, AND JACOB'S THIGH WAS PUT OUT OF JOINT AS HE WRESTLED WITH HIM. THEN HE SAID, LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY BREAKS, BUT JACOB SAID, I WILL NOT LET YOU GO UNLESS YOU BLESS ME." JACOB KNEW WHO HE WAS FIGHTING. BUT HE WAS FIGHTING WITH ALL HIS HEART. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH HE COULD REALLY HAVE DONE AGAINST GOD OR GOD'S SERVANTS TO FIGHT BUT HE DID IT. AND SOMEHOW HE WAS ABLE TO ENDURE UNTIL THE END.

THEN WHAT HAPPENS? VERSE 28, "THEN THE MAN SAID, YOUR NAME SHALL NO LONGER BE JACOB BUT ISRAEL, FOR YOU HAVE STRIVEN WITH GOD AND WITH MEN, AND HAVE PREVAILED." AGAIN, AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS IS THAT SPIRIT OF FIGHTING — OF FIGHTING WITH ALL OF YOUR POWER IN THE CHRISTIAN WAY, WITH ZEAL AND DETERMINATION. BUT KNOW WHY. YOU HAVE TO REASON FOR IT.

HOW ABOUT DAVID? JUST LET ME GIVE YOU ONE EXAMPLE ABOUT DAVID'S FIGHTS. OFTENTIMES WHEN WE SEE THE LIFE OF PEOPLE LIKE THIS WE THINK ABOUT THEIR ADVENTURE, THEIR PROBLEMS. SOMETIMES WE'LL SAY WELL, WHY WAS JACOB SO BLESSED ANYWAY, HE MADE SO MANY MISTAKES? WELL WHY? HOW ABOUT DAVID, HE MADE SO MANY MISTAKES? WELL, GOD KNOWS. THESE PEOPLE HAD SOMETHING GOD LOVED. THESE PEOPLE HAD SOMETHING THAT MADE THEM TO BE MEN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

WOULDN'T YOU THINK IT TAKES COURAGE FOR A BOY — THINK IT WAS A BOY, I DON'T KNOW — LIKE DAVID HERE TO GO TO THE KING OF ISRAEL, WHEN THERE IS A BIG GIANT, GOLIATH. AND DAVID GOES AND TELLS THE KING, LOOK, MAYBE HE CAN FIGHT. I SAMUEL 17:32. "AND DAVID SAID TO SAUL, LET NO MAN'S HEART FAIL BECAUSE OF HIM. YOUR SERVANT WILL GO AND FIGHT WITH THIS PHILIS-

TINE." WHO IS DAVID? HOW COULD HE GO AND FIGHT WITH THE PHILISTINE?

LATER ON IN THE SAME CHAPTER, LOOK WHAT MADE DAVID TELL THE KING WHAT HE TOLD HIM. THIS IS WHAT GIVES YOU THE ANSWER. I SAMUEL 17:45, "THEN DAVID SAID TO THE PHILISTINE, YOU COME TO ME WITH A SWORD AND WITH A SPEAR AND WITH A JAVELIN, BUT I COME TO YOU IN THE NAME OF THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE GOD OF THE ARMIES OF ISRAEL WHOM YOU HAVE DEFIED."

VERSE 46, "THIS DAY THE LORD WILL DELIVER YOU INTO MY HAND," NOT I, THE LORD WILL. THAT'S WHAT MADE DAVID STRONG, IT WASN'T THE POWER OF DAVID EVEN THOUGH HE COULD FIGHT AGAINST LIONS, AS DID SAUL THE KING. WHAT MADE HIM SURE OF HIMSELF WAS HE KNEW GOD WOULD BE FIGHTING FOR HIM. GOD WOULD BE DOING BUT YET, DAVID HAD TO DO HIS SHARE. CAN SEE WHY DAVID WAS A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. IT TAKES TREMENDOUS COURAGE, TREMENDOUS POWER, FAITH TO TRUST IN GOD.

HOW ABOUT DANIEL? DANIEL CHAPTER 6. YOU KNOW SOME OF THESE THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN TO US, BRETHREN, BELIEVE IT OR NOT. SOME OF THESE LESSONS OR EXPERIENCES WE'RE GOING TO HAVE IN THE FUTURE. WE MAY HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE SAME TYPE OF TRIALS PERHAPS. HERE WE HAVE DANIEL TALKING TO KING DARIUS. YET HIS ENEMIES TRIED TO PLOT AGAINST DANIEL, BUT THEY COULD NOT FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH HIM. SO WHAT DID THEY DO?

DANIEL 6:5, "THEN THESE MEN SAID, WE SHALL NOT FIND ANY GROUND FOR COMPLAINT AGAINST DANIEL UNLESS WE FIND IT IN CONNECTION WITH THE LAW OF HIS GOD." THAT'S INTERESTING. AS I SAID, PERHAPS THIS WILL HAPPEN TO YOU AND TO ME. THEY WILL NOT FIND ANYTHING WRONG AGAINST YOU UNLESS THEY FIND SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR RELIGION. SO WHAT DID THEY DO? THEY ASKED THE KING TO LET EVERYONE PRAISE TO THE SAME GOD AND NOT TO OTHER GODS. AND KING DARIUS SIGNED A DOCUMENT.

WHAT DID DANIEL DO? VERSE 10, "WHEN DANIEL KNEW THAT THE DOCUMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED, HE WENT TO HIS HOUSE, WHERE HE HAD WINDOWS IN HIS UPPER CHAMBER OPENED TOWARD JERUSALEM; AND HE GOT DOWN ON HIS KNEES THREE TIMES A DAY AND PRAYED AND GAVE THANKS BEFORE HIS GOD," AS HE HAD DONE PREVIOUSLY.

FANTASTIC! LOOK AT THE COURAGE! THE MAN HAS REACHED THE TOP, HE'S NEXT TO THE KING. THEY WANT TO DESTROY HIM. BUT NO, HE WOULD NOT COMPROMISE WITH GOD. HE WILL

FIGHT EVEN IF HE DIED. SO HE PRAYED TO HIS GOD. YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY, DON'T YOU? HOW ABOUT THE THREE HEBREWS, SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO? THE SAME PRINCIPLE IS HERE AGAIN. IT TAKES COURAGE, IT TAKES FIGHTING, IT TAKES DETERMINATION. FAITH IS FINE, BUT BRETHREN, TO HAVE FAITH YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A REASON TO DO WHAT YOU'RE DOING. DANIEL KNEW THAT WHAT HE WAS DOING WAS RIGHT, HE HAD THE TRUTH.

IN DANIEL 3:17, THEY TOLD NEBUCHADNEZAR, "IF IT BE SO, OUR GOD WHOM WE SERVE IS ABLE TO DELIVER US FROM THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE." VERSE 18 GOES ON TO SAY, BUT IF HE DOESN'T, THEN WE WILL NOT SERVE YOUR GODS, OR WORSHIP THE GOLDEN IMAGE WHICH YOU HAVE SET UP. THAT TAKES A LOT OF COURAGE, BRETHREN, BELIEVE ME.

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU OR I OR ANYONE ELSE AT THIS MOMENT COULD HAVE THIS TYPE OF FAITH, BUT WE SHOULD. TO STAND UP AND SAY, NO, YOU WILL NOT MAKE ME DO ANYTHING WHICH GOD SAYS I SHOULD NOT DO. IT TAKES COURAGE, DOESN'T IT? IT TAKES FIGHTING, TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER, AS PETER SAID IN ACTS CHAPTER 5. BECAUSE THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HAD THE SAME TRIALS IN THEIR OWN TIMES NATURALLY SO THEY TOO HAD TO MAKE A DECISION LIKE DANIEL, LIKE THE THREE HEBREWS.

ACTS 5:27, "AND WHEN THEY HAD BROUGHT THEM IN [THE DISCIPLES] THEY SET THEM BEFORE THE COUNCIL. AND THE HIGH PRIEST QUESTIONED THEM SAYING, DIDN'T WE STRICTLY CHARGE YOU NOT TO TEACH IN THIS NAME [IN CHRIST'S NAME]? [VERSE 29] BUT PETER AND THE APOSTLES ANSWERED, WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN!" THAT TAKES COURAGE, BRETHREN; THAT TAKES FIGHTING. THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE TO BE. AND YET, SOME OF US ARE NOT ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT TAKES REAL BACKBONE PLUS DETERMINATION TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

"CHRISTIAN," THE WORD THE WORLD KNOWS, MEANS A WEAK PERSON. "CHRISTIAN," THE WAY THE BIBLE DESCRIBES IT, IS A STRONG PERSON FULL OF ZEAL, EARNESTNESS, DETERMINATION, AND FAITH, WHO KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS AND ESPECIALLY KNOWS WHAT GOD WANTS, AND WILL DO IT.

I WON'T HAVE TIME TO GO OVER IT, BUT IF YOU EVER STUDIED THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE IN HEBREWS 11, YOU'LL SEE EVERYONE MENTIONED IN HEBREWS 11 IS A PERSON OF COURAGE, A FIGHTER. THEY WENT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST PEOPLE WHO WERE FIGHTING

AGAINST GOD. SOME OF THEM DIED; IN FACT, ALL OF THEM DIED, AS GOD SAYS, BUT THEY ALL WILL BE IN GOD'S KINGDOM.

HOW ABOUT PAUL? YOU KNOW PAUL'S LIFE. ONCE I GAVE A WHOLE SERMON ON PAUL'S LIFE AND HOW HE FOUGHT ALL THE TIME. DID IT TAKE COURAGE? YOU CAN BET YOUR LIFE IT DID! DOES IT TAKE COURAGE FOR YOU MORE THAN IT DID TAKE PAUL TO BE, TO DO WHAT HE SAID? OF COURSE NOT.

YOU SEE, TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER YOU HAVE TO GET CLOSE TO GOD, YOU HAVE TO HAVE THIS TYPE OF FAITH. DO YOU THINK THAT MR. ARMSTRONG IS A FIGHTER? THINK ABOUT HIS LIFE. HE FIGHTS JUST LIKE PETER, LIKE PAUL, LIKE DANIEL. WHEN HE KNOWS WHAT GOD SAYS HE WILL DO IT. I DON'T THINK THERE WERE TOO MANY PEOPLE IN GOD'S CHURCH A YEAR AGO WHO WOULD HAVE FOUGHT FROM THE VERY FIRST AGAINST THE STATE THE WAY MR. ARMSTRONG DID. HE GOT THE POINT AT THE TIME THAT THE WHOLE THING WAS AT STAKE. HE FOUGHT AND CELEBRATED RECENTLY THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF OUR BATTLE WHICH HAS NOT ENDED YET.

READ WHAT HE WRITES IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY. SEE THE WAY THE COLLEGE AND THE STUDENTS WERE HERE. TWENTY YEARS AGO I WAS A FACULTY MEMBER, BUT WE ATTENDED EVERY FORUM AND EVERY ASSEMBLY. SOMETIMES THE ASSEMBLIES WENT FROM 11 AM TO 1 PM . MR. ARMSTRONG WOULD TELL US TIME AND AGAIN HOW THE COLLEGE WAS ESTABLISHED, HOW HE FOUGHT FOR IT HOW HE HAD TO FIGHT AGAINST PASADENA, THE PEOPLE, THE PROPRIETORS. IT WAS A CONSTANT FIGHT; YET, WITH GOD'S HELP, THE BATTLES WERE WON AND YOU AND I ARE HERE TODAY.

GOD WANTS THAT TYPE OF A MAN. JUST LIKE DAVID, JUST LIKE DANIEL, JUST LIKE JACOB, JUST LIKE MOSES. HE LOOKED FOR THAT TYPE OF MAN TO FIGHT. ESPECIALLY IN THIS END TIME. YOU SEE, THAT IS HIS JOB. BUT YOUR JOB ALSO IS TO FIGHT IN THE CHRISTIAN WAY. DON'T LET JUST ANY ONE MAN FIGHT; YOU HAVE TO FIGHT AS MUCH AS ANYONE ELSE. DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE ELSE BUT DO THE BEST YOU CAN IN FAITH, PRAYER, IN MEEKNESS, IN UNDERSTANDING, IN LOVE, IN GETTING CLOSER TO GOD, IN FIGHTING AGAINST YOUR NATURE, IN FIGHTING AGAINST THE DEVIL, IN FIGHTING AGAINST THE WORLD. IF YOU PUT GOD FIRST IN YOUR LIFE, THEN YOU ARE BOUND TO WIN.

THE SADDEST THING TO ME, IN VIETNAM, WAS MOST SOLDIERS, IF NOT ALL SOLDIERS HAD NO IDEA WHAT THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR. I TALKED TO QUITE A FEW SOLDIERS, THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THEY WERE IN VIETNAM FOR. THEY SAID, LOOK, WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR, TO WIN? NO! TO GET

SHOT! WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO WIN, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO FIGHT. BUT WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR? THEY HAD NO PURPOSE TO FIGHT. AND WE LOST, LET'S FACE IT.

NOW I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THAT TYPE OF WAR. I'M TALKING ABOUT THE FIGHT WHERE WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR. WE HAVE A PURPOSE, WE HAVE A KNOWLEDGE, WE HAVE A REASON, WE DON'T HAVE THIS VIETNAM ATTITUDE. YOU DON'T HAVE THIS TYPE OF GIVE UP ATTITUDE.

LOOK AT MATTHEW CHAPTER 5. PERHAPS YOU DIDN'T LOOK AT THIS THIS WAY, BUT THIS, TOO, IS A FIGHT. AS CHRISTIANS, AS GOOD SOLDIERS, AS CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS WE HAVE TO FIGHT. YOU HAVE TO FIGHT TO BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. MATTHEW 5:14, CHRIST SAYS A CITY SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HID. NEITHER DOES A MAN LIGHT A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER A BUSHEL BUT ON A STAND AND IT GIVES LIGHT.

HE SAYS, VERSE 16, "LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GIVE GLORY TO YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN." NOW WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT? MUCH! IT TAKES A GOOD SOLDIER TO BE A GOOD LIGHT BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO BE A SOLDIER TO STAND FOR WHAT YOU KNOW IS RIGHT. YET YOU HAVE TO BE A LIGHT AND GIVE LIGHT IN THE WORLD WHICH IS AGAINST YOU. THE WORLD IS TRYING TO JUST PUT YOU OUT. YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG TO BE A LIGHT BY THE EXAMPLES YOU GIVE, BY WHAT YOU CAN DO, BY WHAT YOU SAY, AND ESPECIALLY BY YOUR FAITH.

YOU KNOW, I'VE SAID TIME AND AGAIN, AND SOMETIMES I JUST WONDER IF WE REALIZE HERE IN THE STATES WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LIGHT WHEN EVERYTHING IS SO EASY FOR US. YOU GO AND SEE IF YOU CAN KEEP THE SABBATH IN HAITI. THEY TOO HAVE THIS VERSE BEFORE THEM; THEY TOO HAVE TO READ THIS VERSE; THEY HAVE TO BE A LIGHT. GOD SAYS YOU HAVE TO KEEP THE SABBATH, THEY KEEP THE SABBATH. BUT IT MEANS FOR THEM LOSING A JOB, LOSING A FAMILY, AND SOMETIMES GOING TO JAIL. TO YOU AND TO ME IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT, DOES IT? IT'S EASIER TO BE A LIGHT HERE THAN TO BE A LIGHT IN A PLACE WHERE YOU COULD GREATLY SUFFER, IT TAKES A LOT OF COURAGE TO BE A CHRISTIAN. THAT TOO IS PART OF BEING A LIGHT, IT TAKES A LOT OF CHARACTER, LOTS OF DETERMINATION AND COURAGE TO BE A LIGHT.

IN EPHESIANS 6, CHRIST AGAIN TALKS ABOUT FIGHTING THROUGH PAUL AND TELLS US WHAT WE ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE TO BE ABLE TO OVERCOME. EPHESIANS 6:13, "THEREFORE TAKE THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD." SEE, WE'RE BACK TO

FIGHTING AGAIN; IT'S BACK AT WAR. WE HAVE TO HAVE AN ARMOUR OF GOD BECAUSE WE'RE SOLDIERS, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS, "THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY, AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND. STAND THEREFORE, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH."

NOW YOU AND I HAVE THIS TRUTH. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, IF WE'RE BACK TO THE TRUNK OF THE TREE NOTHING CAN SHAKE US. I'VE TOLD SOME PEOPLE WHO USED TO BE IN THE CHURCH BEFORE, LOOK, IF YOU EVER LEAVE THE CHURCH I DON'T SEE HOW YOU COULD EVER GO TO ANOTHER CHURCH. IF YOU HAVE THE TRUTH THEN YOU HAVE THE POWER WHICH MAKES YOU HAVE THE FAITH YOU NEED.

AND IT SAYS HAVING PUT ON THE BREAST-PLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS DOING RIGHT, DOING GOOD, OBEYING GOD; THAT'S WHAT THE BREAST-PLATE IS. IF I'M OBEYING GOD AND I KNOW GOD IS WITH ME, I DON'T INTEND TO BE AFRAID. IF I'M NOT DOING WHAT GOD SAYS THEN I WILL NOT HAVE THE POWER TO FIGHT. TIME AND AGAIN, BRETHREN, WE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD ARE LUKEWARM. WE DON'T HAVE THIS TYPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS OR THE TRUTH, OR THE DESIRE.

VERSE 15, HAVING SHOD YOUR FEET WITH THE EQUIPMENT OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE. YES, PEACE TO COME, NOT PEACE RIGHT NOW. WE HAVE TO HAVE THAT MESSAGE TO GIVE THAT WORLD, THAT TODAY WE ARE SUFFERING BUT TOMORROW IS A DAY OF PEACE. THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE TO PROCLAIM.

VERSE 16, BESIDES ALL THESE, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH." YES, THE SHIELD OF FAITH. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL ANALOGY, THAT THE FAITH PROTECTS YOU AS A SHIELD. WHETHER YOU BE SICK OR YOU HAVE TREMENDOUS CHAGRINS, FAITH IS SOMETHING THAT PROTECTS YOU. IT PROTECTS YOU AGAINST ALL THE FLAMING DARTS.

VERSE 17 TALKS ABOUT THE HELMET OF SALVATION. IF YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE UP THIS LIFE FOR YOUR SALVATION IT IS WORTH IT. NOTHING IN THIS WORLD IS WORTH REALLY YOUR SALVATION AS FAR RECOMPENSE OR REWARD IS CONCERNED. SO HE SAYS, VERSE 18, "PRAY AT ALL TIMES" AND SO FORTH. THERE'S YOUR ARMOUR, THERE'S MY ARMOUR, WE HAVE TO FIGHT, WE HAVE TO DEFEND OURSELVES.

I GUESS MOST OF YOU WERE QUITE YOUNG YET, BUT BACK IN 1940, I WAS IN EUROPE AND THERE WAS A WAR BELIEVE IT OR NOT. THE FRENCH WERE HAVING A GOOD TIME. FROM SEPTEMBER 1939 TO 1940 IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH, THEY WERE HAVING A GREAT TIME. THE SOLDIERS AT THE MAGINOT

LINE, IT WAS A DEFENSE LINE, THEY WERE HAVING DRINKS, BEER, DANCES, GIRLS — THAT'S ALL THEY WERE INTERESTED IN. THEY CALLED IT A FUNNY WAR, STRANGE WAR. NO FIGHTS, THERE'S NO FIGHTING TO DO, THEY JUST TOOK SHIELD BEHIND THE MAGINOT LINE.

TIME AND AGAIN I USED TO READ THE PAPERS IN SWITZERLAND SAYING THE SOLDIERS ARE SURE THEY WILL NEVER LOSE THE WAR BECAUSE NO ONE CAN EVER CROSS THAT LINE. THE MAGINOT LINE WAS THE FANTASTIC LINE, THE GERMANS HAD THE SIEGFRIED, THE FRENCH HAD THE MAGINOT LINE.

SO THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE SAFE. WHAT HAPPENED? THEY DID NOT HAVE THIS TYPE OF ARMOUR, THERE WAS NO FAITH, THERE WAS NO MESSAGE, THERE WAS NO PEACE, THERE WAS NO RIGHTEOUSNESS. THE ENEMY CAME AROUND THE MAGINOT LINE, AND THE FRENCH SOLDIERS JUST FELL. FRANCE FELL! LOST THE BATTLE.

I THINK THERE'S A LESSON FOR US. SOME OF US ALSO HAVE SOMEWHAT OF A MAGINOT LINE IN OUR OWN CHRISTIAN LIFE. WE HAVE A LITTLE ROUTINE LIFE. YOU WON'T GO TOO FAR WITH IT, AND YOU WILL FALL UNLESS YOU BE FIGHTING LIKE PAUL DID, LIKE PETER DID, LIKE CHRIST SHOWED US HOW. YET YOU KNOW, WITH ALL THIS, THERE IS SOMETHING MORE BEAUTIFUL YET. YOU HAVE TO FIGHT, I HAVE TO FIGHT, YET, THE FIGHTING IS GOD'S, NOT OURS. THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PART OF IT. GOD IS GOING TO FIGHT, YOU ARE FIGHTING. YET YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO PUT YOUR ARMOUR ON AND GO AND FIGHT.

SOME TIME AGO I REMEMBER MR. ARMSTRONG SAID, DO YOU KNOW WHAT FAITH IS? FAITH IS IF YOU WANT TO MOVE THE EIFFEL TOWER — OR WHATEVER IT WAS YOU WANT IT TO BE MOVED — YOU GO AND PUT THE CORD AROUND IT AND START PULLING IT. IF IT MOVES THAT'S GOD'S DOING IT. BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO DO YOUR SHARE.

NOW IF WE WANT TO GET THE EIFFEL TOWER MOVED AND WE JUST SAY MOVE, IT DOESN'T DO ANYTHING BECAUSE WE'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING. WE HAVE TO DO OUR JOB, AND IF IT HAPPENS, THAT'S GOD'S DOING IT. NOW THIS SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO THE ARMOUR YOU HAVE TO PUT ON. YOU HAVE TO GO AND FIGHT LIKE DAVID. GET THE SWORD AND SWING. IF ANYTHING IS ACCOMPLISHED, IT'S GOD'S DOING.

WHEN OUR FOREFATHERS LEFT ISRAEL, THEY CAME OUT OF SIN, AND THEY WERE AFRAID. JUST LIKE US TODAY WE HAVE COME, I HOPE, OUT OF SIN. WE HAVE COME TO FIGHT AGAINST THE WORLD, AGAINST THE NATURE OF HUMAN CARNAL

MIND, AGAINST SATAN AND SATAN'S WAYS. AND SOMETIMES WE ARE AFRAID, JUST LIKE THE ISRAELITES WERE AFRAID. SOMETIMES WE LIKE TO GO BACK. I HOPE WE NEVER DO. WHAT DID MOSES TELL THEM? EXODUS 14:13, MOSES SAID, "FEAR NOT, STAND FIRM, AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD, WHICH HE WILL WORK FOR YOU TODAY." VERSE 14, "THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU, YOU HAVE ONLY TO BE STILL."

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS? IT TAKES A GOOD SOLDIER TO BE STILL BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO MASTER YOUR CARNAL NATURE, YOUR MOANING AND GROANING AND COMPLAINTS AND YOU HAVE TO HAVE FAITH. THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO BE STILL. YOU MUST KEEP THAT FIGHTING ATTITUDE; YOU HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST YOURSELF TO BE STILL.

THE ISRAELITES WERE SCARED, THEY WEREN'T STILL. GOD SAYS, LOOK, YOU DO YOUR PART, I'LL DO MINE. I'LL FIGHT FOR YOU. IN THE MEANTIME PUT THE ARMOUR AROUND YOU AND GO AND DO WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO. I THINK IT'S BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU LOOK AT IT THAT WAY.

THE SAME PROMISE WAS GIVEN LATER ON TO JOSHUA, AFTER MOSES DIED, AND JOSHUA TOOK OVER. IN JOSHUA 1:5, GOD TELLS JOSHUA, "NO MAN SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND BEFORE YOU ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE; AS I WAS WITH MOSES, SO I WILL BE WITH YOU; I WILL NOT FAIL YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU. BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE."

WE'RE BACK TO WHERE WE STARTED, AREN'T WE? GOD WILL FIGHT FOR US BUT WE HAVE TO BE STRONG; WE HAVE TO BE OF GOOD COURAGE. HE WILL NEVER FORSAKE US BUT WE SHOULD PUT THE ARMOUR OF GOD AROUND US. AS YOU CAN SEE BRETHREN, THE FIGHTING IS OF GOD BUT WE HAVE TO BE READY FOR IT.

LET'S GO BACK AGAIN TO ANOTHER EXAMPLE MR. ARMSTRONG GAVE SOME TIME AGO. TIME AND AGAIN PEOPLE GO TO HIM AND SAY, LOOK, MR. ARMSTRONG, WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, IT'S BEAUTIFUL, THIS AUDITORIUM, THIS BEAUTIFUL COLLEGE. WHAT IS THE ANSWER? HE SAYS, GOD DID IT, BUT THAT'S NOT THE END OF IT. HE SAYS, BUT I HAD TO WORK AS THOUGH I HAD DONE IT. THERE'S THE WHOLE SECRET. HE HAD TO WORK AS THOUGH HE HAD DONE IT, BUT GOD DID IT.

THE SAME WAY YOU HAVE TO FIGHT AS THOUGH YOU ARE WINNING, BUT GOD IS DOING THE WINNING. IF YOU GET THIS PRINCIPLE, BRETHREN, THEN YOU WILL HAVE A TOTALLY DIFFERENT OUTLOOK TO YOUR LIFE. THEN YOU WILL HAVE THE PEACE OF MIND, YOU WILL HAVE THE FORTITUDE, YOU WILL HAVE THE COURAGE, YOU WILL HAVE THE FAITH BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN NEVER

LOOSE. YOU WILL HAVE TRIALS, YOU'LL HAVE TRIBULATION, YOU WILL HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST YOUR NATURE, AGAINST DOUBTS, AGAINST RULERS. BUT GO BACK TO THE TRUNK OF THE TREE AGAIN.

AFTER YOU'RE AT THE TRUNK OF THE TREE, YOU SAY, I KNOW GOD IS DOING THE FIGHTING, NOT I. IF THAT MOUNTAIN MOVES, I DIDN'T DO IT, GOD DID. BUT YOU HAVE TO WORK AS HARD AS THOUGH YOU WERE DOING IT. YOU SEE, UNLIKE VIETNAM, WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR. UNLIKE VIETNAM WE HAVE A REASON, WE HAVE A GOAL, WE HAVE A PURPOSE, AND WE HAVE A COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF — CHRIST. WE HAVE ALL THE FAITH WE NEED FROM THAT COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. HE'S GOING TO FIGHT FOR YOU, HE'S GOING TO LEAD YOU AND HE WANTS YOU TO BE OVERCOMERS. HE WANTS YOU TO BE IN HIS KINGDOM.

IF YOU HAVE THIS TYPE OF AN ATTITUDE, AND CAN BE THIS TYPE OF A SOLDIER, THEN YOU CAN SAY WHAT PAUL DID IN II TIMOTHY 4:6. PAUL SAYS, "FOR I AM ALREADY ON THE POINT OF BEING SACRIFICED." YOU CAN SAY THIS, I CAN SAY THIS, BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TOMORROW. "THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE HAS COME." VERSE 7, "I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT." PAUL HAD THE ARMOUR HE SPOKE OF IN EPHESIANS. PAUL DID HAVE THAT FAITH, PAUL DID HAVE THAT UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE. YET HE DID NOT HAVE A GOOD EASY LIFE DID HE? HE WAS PERSECUTED; HE WAS ACTUALLY ATTACKED. BUT HE SAID, "I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH."

WHAT HE SAYS IN VERSE 8 IS GOING TO APPLY TO YOU AND TO ME. "HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, WILL AWARD ME ON THAT DAY." WHICH DAY IS THIS? THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN. PAUL SAYS, WHEN CHRIST RETURNS I WILL HAVE MY REWARD. HE SAYS, NOT ONLY TO ME IS A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BUT TO ALL WHO HAVE LOVED HIS COMING. WHO HAVE LOVED HIM ENOUGH TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER TO FIGHT.

SO YOU SEE, BRETHREN, THIS VERSE, THIS CROWN, THIS VICTORY WASN'T ONLY FOR PAUL. IT IS FOR YOU AND FOR ME. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE TO BE GOOD SOLDIERS UNTIL THE END.

END