

Weapons of War - The Word Part 4

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[0 : 0 0] remain standing for the reading of the word I mean let's stand thank you thank you sir oh there is a bomb in Gilead and that bomb is right here in Chattanooga too only bomb I know that's transcontinental transgenerational transcendentarian it's a bomb that keeps on giving and keeps on healing generation century after century that bomb in Gilead is Jesus and he's here he's present never will I leave you never will I forsake you ah

Lord we praise you we praise you for you are worthy you are glorious you are good whom have we in heaven but you on earth our hearts desire nothing beside you you are our treasure you are our joy blessed be the name of the Lord worthy is the lamb that was slain you deserve the honor and the glory you're worthy of our life you're worthy of our suffering you're worthy of our death because you are worthy we know we have eternal life we fear not because you said fear not we trust in you give us grace give us grace oh may we be instruments of grace justice and mercy may we share the good news may we live the good news oh may people know that you are real when they see that we love one another that we're committed to one another that we stand with one another oh God may people see it and be amazed be amazed that you could call together a people like us a ragtag group of people from all cultures and lands and tongues and nations oh Lord even here in Chattanooga may they be amazed at the love of God they see among us in this church and other like-minded churches oh God oh bear witness to Jesus do your holy work among us but bear witness to Jesus bless our people bless your sheep we prone to wander Lord we feel it prone to leave the God we love but thank you that you're the great shepherd of the sheep

Lord Jesus and you will not let us wander too far oh Lord have mercy have mercy hear our cry oh Lord bless your word now may it go forth with your power and accomplish all that you will do your holy work in us do that surgery with the scalpel of your sword do that work in our hearts now so that we might be the people of God that we might grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus oh God do your holy work now through your word through the sword of the spirit use this unworthy servant who is he that you should use him to proclaim Jesus oh God we deserve nothing but you give us everything hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah blessed be the name of the Lord father we ask these blessings in Jesus name amen amen amen amen a passage comes from two places today in general of course Ephesians 6 and then Matthew 4 hear now the word of God samplings from chapter 6 of Ephesians finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the authorities against the cosmic powers of this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places take up the sword of the spirit which is the word of God then

Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil after fasting 40 days and 40 nights he was hungry and the tempter came and said to him if you are the son of God command these stones to become loaves of bread but he answered it is written man should not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God then the devil said took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple said to him if you are the son of God throw yourself down for it is written he will command his angels concerning you and on their hands they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against the stone Jesus said to him again it is written you shall not put the Lord your God to the test and again the devil took him to a very high mountain show him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and he said to him all these

I will give you if you will fall down and worship me then Jesus said to him be gone Satan for it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve then the devil left him and behold angels came and were ministering to him that is the word of the Lord please be seated and once again thank you praise team wow thank you for leading us in worship thank you for the

wonderful videos and testimonies thank you Jason and Nisha thank you Jason for your leadership of the committee this Black History Month committee we've been blessed so much this this this month may God continue that blessing as we continue to go out go throughout the rest of this year you know it's interesting that in the early 20th century when a lot of the theologians in evangelical churches in this country were losing their confidence in the

[7 : 44] Bible as the inerrant and inspired word of God the black church did not when the when the the fundamentals were what they were called were spoke about the evangelical church was talking about the fundamentals of the faith things like the inerrancy of scripture which was the heading the big fundamental now we're not talking about fundamentalism here we're talking about what theologians felt were the fundamentals of the faith and they were saying these are the non-negotiables if we if we lose this we lose everything things like and ahead of that was the inerrancy of scripture things like the virgin birth things like the resurrection things like the second coming of Christ bodily those were the fundamentals that people were saying we must hold on to but sadly the evangelical church which was largely white still did not put down racism they were holding to the fundamentals of the faith but yet they were holding on to white supremacy which in my mind denied the fundamentals of the faith in many ways sadly but it was and sadly they believed that black people were not intelligent enough to stand against this tide that was sweeping through our country coming out of Germany actually German schools of theology there and they they thought we were too stupid that we couldn't I'm not exaggerating

I'm not exaggerating some of these men felt that we just lacked the intelligence to stand and so they were really trying to teach us what they failed to realize was that we were just as smart as they were and so in the AME Zion church there was already black theologians writing out the same doctrines the same doing the same work using some of the same language that our white brothers were using to stand against this tide that was sweeping across our seminaries and into many of our churches the mainline churches fell for it and so confidence in the Bible began to fall in many places confident in the Bible but confidence in the Bible has always been the hallmark of the African American church in this country always been it's interesting that when you think about one of the great leaders of the of that wonderful underground railroad

Harriet Tubman what was she nicknamed Moses because they saw in her what they saw in the Moses of the Bible leading his people to freedom it's because they believed the Bible that was no fable they didn't want to put the hope in a fable they believed and knew the Bible was the word of God it was the history of God's dealing with humanity and they saw in Harriet Tubman a smaller version of that Moses all throughout slavery even into Jim Crow the confidence in the Bible is what gave many African American churches the ability to preach a message that not only was theologically sound but it was socially practical they preached God is great and God is sovereign and Jesus is Lord and and would love our neighbor as we love ourselves and there is freedom in Christ it was that church that continued to hold fast though they were thought to be inferior intellectually culturally and religiously and even educationally by some yet they held firm to the truth of the gospel it always grieves me when I think about even in my own denomination

I wonder I look at my my brothers I've been an ordained minister since oh what was that year 1998 been a member of this denomination since 1990 my wife and I I've gone to many general assemblies love my brothers and sisters love the PCA really do I love this denomination but it always grieves my heart that I think some of them look at me and brothers like me and think that somehow we're inferior it grieves my heart when I when I when my brothers are more concerned about arguing and defeating critical race theory CRT than we are about the unloving legacy of racism and racial indifference that exists in some of our churches I was warned even by another black pastor years ago before I came here that I shouldn't come here a man who mentored me whose word meant something to me and he said

Kevin you shouldn't go because he said those white folk are going to either torture you until you leave or just leave before you get there all that stuff breaks my heart when my wife and I my family we were to a wedding in Charlottesville this was after the riot that took place there and people were killed it wasn't a riot at first it became one after the guy drove into the crowd and ran folk over but the protest after the protest took place we were in Charlottesville we were walking in a parking lot and this white man almost ran us over and never stopped I mean I'm serious I had to stop I had to stop my family drove by and I had to and here's what I hate he might not have actually seen us but because of what happened in Charlottesville just before that

[14:17] I had to wonder did he not care about our lives because we were black how do I give him the benefit of the doubt when I recognize what exists in our country still it breaks my heart and I want to lash out I want to find a brick I want to go after that guy I want it to lash out and when I believe that someone is looking at me and treating me like I'm an idiot because they're white and I'm black I want to lash out I want to but then the Lord reminds me of something he takes me to places Romans 12 19 and 21 beloved never avenge yourselves believe it to the wrath of God for it is written vengeance is mine I will repay says the Lord to the contrary if your enemy is hungry feeding if he is thirsty giving something to drink for by doing so you will heap coals burning coals on his head and then here's that last word do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil what is that what is that that's spiritual warfare that's the sword of the spirit rising up to defeat evil in my own heart because of injustice evil injustice coming towards me it's time family to pick up the sword of the spirit it's time for you each one of you each one of you who knows the name of

Jesus to pick up the sword of the spirit and do battle God's way fight whatever we're fighting God's way with God's weapons and for the glory of Jesus not for the glory of my ethnic group not for the glory of America but for the glory of Jesus it's time to do battle God's way with God's weapons and for that we must turn now to the master swordsman the Lord Jesus is the master swordsman who wheels his sword with precision I wonder if Paul was thinking about him in Ephesians 6 and he said pick up the sword of the spirit which is the word of God in Matthew 4 that's where we find ourselves in

Matthew 4 it's also the same in Luke chapter 4 by the way well if you keep that in mind but I'm in Matthew here he shows us how to use the sword of the spirit against personal attacks from the evil one we just read it our Lord Jesus has just been baptized by John the Baptist the spirit in chapter three the spirit of God has descended upon him like a dove the old the Isaiah says he gives the Messiah the spirit without measure the spirit of the Lord is falling upon him the father spoke as Christ was being baptized by his cousin John the Baptist the voice from heaven came this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased the trinity is revealed at the baptism of Jesus the son is in the water the spirit is descending upon him and the father speaks from glory he is literally being affirmed the Lord Jesus is being affirmed by the other two members of the trinity and then the Bible says in chapter 4 verse 1 that he is then led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit for the express purpose of being tempted by the devil so the first thing we notice in our passage is this this battle was orchestrated by God the Holy Spirit this spiritual battle was God's doing Jesus was being led into temptation for us so that he could tell us to pray lead me not into temptation but deliver me from the evil one we get to pray that prayer because

Jesus was led into temptation here in the wilderness he is the second Adam who will pass or fail for a new humanity here in the wilderness he is the new Israel who will either be true to God and go into the promised land or like ancient Israel he will worship the golden calf they spent 40 years he spends 40 days hungry and thirsting he has been fasting and praying for a month his body is weak truly weak he's weak because he's fully human it is a true it is as a true human being that the son of God fights this battle here you must understand that he fights as one of us so he sympathizes with you in your suffering like

[20:26] Hebrew says he understands what it means to be tempted so you and I can know we can stand like him he's more than an example but he's not less than an example we know we see him standing as one of us like John said the word is truly flesh three times the enemy confronts him with ways of meeting his needs and desires without God that's a word for all of us meeting our needs and desires without God that's how the enemy loves to come against you he does it here with the Lord Jesus as Phil Riken puts it temptations are his temptations are related to three things provision power and protection this is why temptations are so real the enemy holds up what you want what you desire and says he says to you every day you can have it my way you think it's your way he's really saying you can have it my way and

Jesus did not resist the devil with pop psychology or the wisdom of the philosophers Aristotle Plato Socrates of his day he didn't resist him with the latest fad on social media he didn't resist him with religious traditions or cool sounding religious cliches he didn't resist him with the latest self help language or ideas of the culture our blessed Lord parried and attacked the enemy's ideas with the sword of the spirit which is the word of God just a note on the attacks here the first two the devil attacks Jesus identity as the son of God twice you heard me emphasizing when I read it twice he says if you are the son of God if you are the son of God here's the question will Jesus believe the

word of the father he just heard at his baptism he was attacking the very word of God to the son of God you are my beloved son and the devil says really really are you really a the child of God he wanted Jesus to doubt his identity as beloved by the father to doubt the father's love and everyday family he he comes at you and wants you to do the same to doubt the father's love to doubt the love of Jesus God tells you in his word that you are his child John 1 12 just for one but to all who did receive him that's receive Jesus who believed in his name he gave the right you have the right to become children of

God do you believe on the Lord Jesus as the son of God and your savior from sin and death do you believe you are a child of God and the devil will tell you you're not will you lift up the word the sword and say yes I am the word says this it is written so the devil says to Jesus prove you are God's son first temptation the test of provision make bread man you hungry you look hungry man boy you I can imagine he looked hungry humanity people he looked hungry he was I can imagine I can only imagine how physically weak he must have been dragging his body you know probably doing a lot of sitting down maybe laying down and the devil looks at him and says if you the son of God what you doing living like this man get some make some good old some Jamaican hard dough bread whatever your preference is some whole wheat some rye whatever you love some pumpnickel but Jesus is submitting to the father's will it was the father's will that he experienced the suffering of hunger and he knew the father would provide for him in his time the last verse says angels came and ministered verse 11 right angels came and ministered you know what they did they brought him a sandwich he trusted his father and chose to live by every word that comes from his mouth he's quoting Deuteronomy here comes the sword Deuteronomy 8 3 that's what he's quoting man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of [26 : 24] God his heart is being protected by the sword the word Jesus did not listen listen Jesus did not allow any physical need or craving to lead him away from obedience to God this is important this is really important this is where we so often he I'm gonna say it again he did not allow any physical need or craving to lead him away from obedience to God and this is how he get the devil gets us so often he tells us we need and he's not lying half the time sometimes we need love we need someone to care for us but the question is how are we gonna get it sex compromise your heart and

God's design and your dignity sex outside of marriage sex of all kinds outside of marriage sex what are we doing looking for love we want love I want somebody to love me so maybe that's human and the devil says you can have it my way we want money how are we gonna get it overwork workaholism keep telling ourselves we're doing it for our family workaholism is just another way of another idolatry good work too pastors overwork good work but it's idolatrous because it's really about our own glory and not about Jesus you overwork sometimes some of you should we steal that's always an easy way to get it but you know we're too respectable to just take it and snatch it we'll do it it's tax time boy how often do we steal it tax time fudging the numbers exaggerating the giving exaggerate yes I gave ten thousand dollars to my church you gave two lie and wonder and we'll find accountants who will fudge for us and sometimes we just want to just take it I mean let's be honest sometimes young people steal and don't have to they steal some of them don't have to come from families where their everything is being taken care of but they steal anyway why gambling so y'all think I'm making this stuff up you think respectable Christian people don't have these problems I've been a pastor too long gambling you know just a few I got a few bucks extra bucks I can throw away here and then you're gambling and you're putting all your hope and chance and luck those are horrible gods they will eat you alive because here's the problem we begin to judge ourselves by what we have and how much we have and we and we and so therefore I got to have more of that to be like them or have status and so we we want money we want we want honor in other words we want glory how are we going to get it put others down promote ourselves as better demand special treatment do you know who my family is do you know who I am lie about ourselves and our resume that's my favorite because resumes you know we're supposed to tell people how great we are there's nothing wrong for resume y'all I'm not saying there's anything wrong but when you lie on it then it becomes a problem you know you didn't lead that project you just were on we want we want and we want but how are we going to get God's way or our way Jesus is being confronted with that very thing and it's something he needed because he was going to die without food I don't know how long my doctors are here I don't know how long you can go without eating but I gotta believe 40 days is probably getting near that point I

don't know for sure but I'm thinking I don't think he can go into 40 days without eating he really needed food it was not wrong for him to want food how is he going to get it listen to the devil or wait on God the second temptation is for protection the devil changes his tactic he actually quotes from Psalm 91 he tells Jesus if you jump off the temple publicly this is what he's telling him I'm just Kevin Smith translation if you jump off the temple publicly you know

[32 : 35] God will have his angels catch you he will have to protect you because you're his son he can't let you die he must have said see I know the Bible too best theologian in the world best anti-theologian in the world he said then they will know then you will know because if you're the son this is another if question then you will know that you really are the son of God and guess what everybody else will know who you are take a leap of faith Jesus this is why it's so important that we learn how to interpret the Bible thoughtfully in context and letting other scripture inform what you see in any passage we compare scripture with scripture the devil did quote from Psalm 91 but Jesus assumes that scripture does not contradict itself but informs itself write that down somebody tweet that not contradict but informs so our

Lord quotes from Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 16 to bring balance to Satan's presumption if he had done what the devil asked he would have been pushing the father to do his will rather than what Jesus said he came to do we saw St. John already he came he said I came to do my father's will he'd be pushing the father to do his will he refused to presume upon the father's grace faith is not presumption but one day as one commentator put it Jesus would cast himself into the father's hands on the cross he would just throw himself into the father's hands when he would cry father into thy hands I commit my spirit and the father would catch him and in catching him at that day he will catch all of us too who cast our souls into the nail scarred hands of

Jesus here's the point you and I must not willfully put ourselves in compromising situations with the motivation to prove our faith in God or God's love for us that's putting the Lord to the test you do not put yourself willfully in a compromising situation to prove your faith in God or to get God twist his arm as it were to prove his love for you there are times yes when we're following God where he will lead us into a dangerous difficult situation keep in mind that's what's happening with Jesus that God led him to enter into the wilderness there are times when you will be led into the wilderness but you are not to throw yourselves into the wilderness saying hey God prove prove yourself prove me that's about your glory not about his

Jesus raises the sword of the spirit once again blocks the devil's attack how do you do that do you know the word of God that you can parry such an attack upon you an attack that says exalt yourself how are you going to fend against that an attack that says you're better than him you're better than her how do you defeat that will you raise up the word of God too remind yourself maybe that you are to count others as more significant than yourselves maybe the third and final temptation was for power Satan the god of this world small g the ruler of the hearts of the nations was offering Jesus the nations to rule isn't that what Jesus is destined to do as we saw in revelation he's destined to rule the nations but he knew it meant the cross first Jesus knew it meant the cross Satan did not know God's plan for Christ because he did he would never crucified him he would never led the people to crucify him he would have known that's not the route to go he didn't know what God was planning to do but he did know who Jesus was and so he offers him what he knows he wants he wants to rule the nations he is the one the ancient of days calls to him in Daniel 7 and gives him the rule of the nations Satan knew that it's a serious attack here the crown without the cross maybe not falling on the ground before the devil just one quick bow of the head just just can you imagine if Jesus had worshipped the devil no salvation no hope no justice the world would not have the ultimate picture of real love

[38 : 22] God's love the cross is real love the great picture of real love life death and judgment for everyone then Satan would have gotten what he wanted he would have gotten the glory Satan is Lord not Jesus that would have been on people's hearts aren't you ever tempted to follow God along the path of least resistance aren't you ever tempted to easy I love the movie Annie well I saw the movie not to play the movie Annie and there's one song called easy street easy street easy street I love that scene where they're going down the street they're dancing easy street they think they got some money and they're going we got money daddy warbucks is going to pay us easy street and they lying and crooked get what you want without any real sacrifice that's why people cheat on exams get what you want without the sacrifice of studying and saying no to going out with your friends on the weekend and staying in to actually put the work in do the work baby but let's be

honest as a matter of fact brother to say it we tend to run from sacrifice or any type of struggle we do we we we can't even talk to each other if we disagree we run from even engaging with one another over issues of disagreement because we feel traumatized if we have to do that what is that we opt out so easily we we're kings and queens of opting out we worship easy and smooth and that Jesus warned us in Matthew that broad is the way that leads to destruction that's the easy street road that's the easy road it's broad it's easy wide lanes no traffic nobody pushing you it's broad it's easy smooth but narrow is the way to salvation narrow this road is rocky this road is small you're going to bump into each other you're going to push somebody by accident or maybe on purpose but that's the narrow road because that's the road of salvation that's the road to Jesus you cannot grow spiritually you cannot grow to spiritual maturity on easy street Jesus says it so well in Matthew 16 Jesus told his disciples if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me whoever would save his life will lose it whoever loses his life for my sake will find it that is the word of the

Lord brothers and sisters denying ourselves picking up the cross of suffering denying ourselves something that you could have and maybe you think you deserve but you deny yourself for a higher purpose wow is that even Christian it's not American but is it Christian because the road to glory is through the cross always Jesus was even looking past the cross to the joy set before him according to Hebrews 12 we have to we have to do the same thing as well or we end up worshipping the devil's substitute because it's easier Phil Reichen says it again Jesus was choosing instead to walk the way of the cross his goal was not to gain a kingdom for himself but to save his people to do this he was willing to suffer and die for our sins as for the kingdom he would wait to receive it from the father's hand he knew the kingdom was coming but he came to save his subjects his brothers and sisters this is mortal combat he gives this final thrust with the sword from

Deuteronomy 6:13 he paraphrased it a bit it says this it is the Lord your God you shall fear him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear to fear God is to worship him rightly he shall be your fear he shall be the one you reverence and stand in awe of that's what fear means here he shall be the one that you know you must please and to whom you must give account you it's him he is holy father who loves you but yet you know him to be holy father and so there's this trembling as it were in his presence even though there's great love there's also reverence and awe if you give yourself to what is convenient and easy that is what you end up worshipping it is only in fearing the Lord that we find his protection psalm 34:7 the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them who does the angel of the Lord deliver those who fear the Lord who worship him in the beauty of holiness those who behold his majesty and glory in Christ he delivers them he protects them this is how to fight the enemy with God's great weapon the sword of the spirit we can be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power because Jesus defeated the devil God's way he did it for us and he did it in our place because we will fail we will get sucker punched but we do not but though we fall we get up and we get up so that we can stand with the sword of the spirit you got me last time but

[46 : 09] I'm ready this time you ever say that to the devil you got me last time but by the grace of God I'm going to be ready next time do you recognize you're in a mortal combat a real fight a real battle do you understand that the moment you open your eyes in the morning it's on and then you get out of bed but the great news of the gospel is that Jesus is victorious for us and he will be victorious in us but what are you using to parry his attacks what are you lifting up when the devil comes at you with a hay maker when he comes at you with this sword of darkness what are you lifting up to parry him if it's not the word of the

Lord you're going to lose a limb you're going to lose something you're going to get it right here it behooves us to know the book to let the book know us because this searches us God's word searches us it behooves us there's no other way there's no way around this there's no magic bullet there's no you know you go to enough small groups there's no group that can do this for you you got to know the Bible we got to get in the book family and we got all kinds of doing books out in the market we got to know the word that I might not sin against you draw the sword against all the isms and schisms draw the sword against the stuff that goes on inside of you your loneliness your anxiety your depressions draw the sword let

God work let God reassure you draw the sword against criticisms that come against the church draw the sword draw the sword against your pride and your arrogance draw the sword against the cultures squeezing in telling you this is the way telling you that now the sexual ethic of the

Christians of the Bible is wrong draw the swords family draw the sword don't don't draw sociology or psychology draw the sword first they can help a little bit but they ain't the real deal draw the sword draw the sword you'll be surprised how the God will renew your mind renew your heart help you stand against the enemy transform your life guide you in the way you should go give you confidence and motivation

I need motivation almost every week I say Lord can I do something else and then God says I need motivation what do you need what do you desire what is the enemy showing you as a substitute draw the sword father in Jesus name Lord help us go with us in this fight for Jesus sake amen