

Weapons of War - The Word Part 3

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- [0 : 0 0] Amen, amen, amen. We have been blessed once again with beautiful music to help us to worship the Lord.
- All because you're singing doesn't mean you're worshipping. I pray that you have found the songs a real gift to help you worship, to lift your hearts to the Lord, to meditate upon his goodness.
- What a blessing this service has been. If you're visiting with us, we welcome you in Jesus' name. And if you're with us for the first time online, we welcome you. We've been having some technical issues, I think you've noticed, and that's how technology is.
- We live in a fallen world. Stuff breaks. Get over it. And then you can do it. But we'll get it fixed and be right as rain in no time.
- We turn once again to Ephesians chapter 6. We are looking at the weapons of war that we've been given. And we've been studying now the sword of the spirit.
- [1 : 0 4] And we will continue to study the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Let's pray. Father, as we come now, we recognize that we have no strength in and of ourselves.
- The enemy that we face is stronger than we are. He has beat us up this past week. Some of us have fallen radically. Some of us have just been bruised and battered and we're tired.
- Father, we come now that we might be made strong in you and in your mighty power. Oh, that we would stand clothed in the armor that Jesus has purchased for us.
- Thank you for the gift of it. We have it. But Lord, help us to learn to rely upon what you have given us. So, Father, please, may your word go forth now that we might learn to take up the sword of the spirit and wield it like a fiend in the name of Jesus.
- Wield it in this great battle, this mortal combat that we face. Oh, God, may we wield this sword, teach us, instruct us, and help us.
- [2 : 1 2] And, Father, may you wield the sword in us so that, Lord, we might know what it means to be transformed by the grace of God in Jesus Christ, your son.
- Use your unworthy servant. Make him a faithful swordsman now for your glory and the good of your people and the salvation of the lost. In Jesus' name we do pray.
- Amen. Amen. Ephesians chapter 6, once again I'll begin reading in verse 14, which begins the description of the armor.
- Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace, in all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.
- And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. That is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.
- [3 : 2 6] Please be seated. I'd like to say a special welcome to our classmate, Miss Priscilla Preece.

It's so good to see you there. Bless you. Keep in mind, in these messages, particularly on the sword, we are seeking to better understand what we've been given.

We want to better understand the sword of the Spirit so that we can wield it more effectively in all of our spiritual battles. I remember when I was learning defense in college, one of the things you didn't want to do is when somebody parried your thrust is to drop your sword.

It was easy to do that because sometimes somebody would parry kind of fiercely. So you're lunging and somebody goes, wham! And you could drop your sword. Bad idea.

You're wide open. Or something we learned about fencing is that you had to have what we call point control. The tip of the sword is, in most weapons, the first two weapons, is your main way of getting points.

[4 : 42] You have to stab people. But you had to learn to control the point of your sword so that you always hit on target. Point control. Learning how to put the tip of the sword on the place where you can score.

Our battles, our spiritual battles, are lost and we fall into sin because we're not good with holding on to our sword.

Sometimes we don't have good point control. We're off target with our sword. We've got to become more adept with the word of God.

We've got to focus. Learn it. Know it. Love it. Like the psalmist said, I love your law.

You must love the word of God. For God is revealed there. Jesus is revealed there. And all that he has for us is revealed in his word.

[5 : 53] So this is crucial, learning how to wield the sword. And so we are taking time. But I want to ask you a question, basically, and I like to ask questions.

Are you willing to pray and commit to learning to use God's sword? To being transformed, even, by that same sword?

Last week, mostly we looked at how the spirit wields the sword of the word of God in the area of conviction. The spirit uses the sword like a precision scapel to, as Hebrews 4.12 reminds us, to the discerning and judging the thoughts and intentions of our hearts.

The word reveals what we really want, what we really think, who we really are.

And we looked at, like I said, Hebrews 4.12, but there's also Hebrews 4.13 that comes after Hebrews 4.12. Basically, we can run, but we can't hide from the word.

[7 : 05] That's the point here. It won't be on the screen. That's the point. We can run, but we can't hide from the word. God knows where you are. God knows you. Hebrews 4.13, and no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

4.12, he tells us that we have this double-edged sword. That's the word of God. And then he tells us in the very next verse that no creature is hidden from his sight.

Nothing or no one in all creation can hide from God. In this context, that extends to the word.

Because he's talking about the word. And then he says God, so he's connecting two of them. Listen, God says we are naked and exposed before him.

You can look very religious, but God sees your heart. If anyone has been raised in a Christian home and church where the word was preached, taught, and lived, then that word can find them.

[8 : 22] That word can still find them. If that's you or if you know somebody, if you got children, that word can still find them. We saw this in our church plant as parents who had walked away from the Lord and his church for years.

But once they had children, they found this great push, this great desire to bring their children to church so they can be taught the word of God.

And what? And what? And what? And God surprised them. He saved the parents. Because there's something. When the word's been put in you and you walk away from it, it's like God haunts you.

It just haunts you. That word is there. It's been put in your mind, in your heart. It's there. And at some point, God may just say, boop.

And it bubbles up wherever you are. John Newton, as you know, wrote the wonderful hymn, Amazing Grace.

[9 : 36] If you know his story, you will know he had a godly mother who taught him the word of God and prayed for him. And his father was a sea captain and he was a wild man. And so soon as Newton grew up, he went to sea and he became a slaver.

He's part of a slave ship. And even at one point fell so far down, he himself got enslaved by this wicked woman. And she tortured him. Well, he finally escaped her.

And he's on this ship. And he's trying to get back to his old slaving ways. And what happens is this ship hits a storm and Newton is sent down into the hold, which is a very dangerous place to be, to bail.

Pump, baby, pump. Keep, get the water. And they're down there bailing and he knows he's going to die. And all of a sudden, he remembers what his mother had taught him. The word bubbled up.

And you know the rest of the story. God does save him. He becomes an amazing preacher and pastor and writes some of the great Christian hymns. One of the most famous of all, which is Amazing Grace.

[10 : 47] Word. God knows what you think even of his word. In other words, how you respond to the word of God shows how you respond to God.

You can't separate God from his word. David said it so poetically in Psalm 139, 1 through 4 about the searching nature of God.

Oh, Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You deserve my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down. I am acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue. Behold, oh, Lord, you know it all together.

Did God's knowledge of him scare David? I believe it did. But he also knew that God loved him and wanted him to walk with him for his own good and God's glory.

[11 : 58] So here's how he ends that psalm, verses 23 and 24. Search me, oh God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.

See if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. You see, listen, listen.

When you know God loves you because you're in his son Jesus, you want his word to search you. You want him to, Lord, search me, know me so you can lead me.

You're not afraid that God knows you because you want to be known by him. And you know that the only way that that can happen is in Christ, in faith, in Jesus, and allowing the word of God into your life.

Not running from the word like a Jonah syndrome, but no. Allowing that word to pierce your heart. Be naked before God.

[13 : 20] It's okay because he loves you. Child of God. Now that is the convicting, discerning, judging side of the sword, of the spirit, as God uses it, as the spirit uses it.

A good example is Nathan the prophet confronting David. Oh, do you remember that? When he got finished telling that parable, all David could say was, I'm the man.

David said, you're the one. David said, yep, I'm him. He didn't like a ton of bricks. The word found him. And David fell before God.

I have sinned against the Lord. Psalm 51. Go back and read it when you get a chance. That's his expression of what it means to be found and convicted by the word of God.

It's good for us to be convicted by God's word. Paul Tripp in his devotional New Morning Mercies says this. Since sin is deeper than bad behavior.

[14 : 38] Oh, I love that phrase. Sin is deeper than bad behavior. Trying to do better isn't a solution. Only grace that changes our heart can rescue us.

And in grace, God sends his word. He sends the word of the gospel. He sends his word to pierce our hearts so that we can deal with something more than bad behavior.

We can deal with the fact that we like it. We can deal with the idolatries that cause us to worship God's substitutes.

And God can do that wonderful surgery. The only time in the world you ever heard someone doing surgery with a sword.

But God does it. Because only the sword of the spirit can cut deep enough to really deal with your damaged emotions. With your damaged soul.

[15 : 46] Only the sword of the spirit can get down deep enough. Medication may be helpful. Therapy may be helpful. But only the word of God. Amen.

So remember, there is another. There's also another edge to the sword. Remember I said last time that there are two edges to the sword. We've been looking at that convicting edge, right? And even that judging edge. But there's also the saving edge of the sword.

And the saving edge of the sword transforms us. When the word gets to work in us, slicing and dicing, it begins a transformation.

We're back to Ephesians. We're back there again. Remember, Paul is at the end of the letter. And a lot of the things he's talking about in the sword, he's kind of mentioned them early on in the letter. Ephesians chapter 4, 21 to 24.

He says this. Assuming. Listen now. Listen to the words. Assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him as the truth is in Jesus.

[16 : 52] Hint, hint, hint, hint. To put off your old self. What were we taught? To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds. And to put on the new self created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Now, you heard the word. You can see it on the screen. Listen. This renewal that he's talking about, the renewal of our minds, which allows us to continually put on our new selves, which are image of Christ, is accomplished.

How is it accomplished by the Holy Spirit working through what they heard, what they were taught, and the truth in Jesus.

The word of God. How are they being transformed? How are their minds being renewed? It's because the word, the spirit, is wielding the sword, the other edge, to continually transform the people of God as we sit under the word, as we study the word, as we read the word, as we pray the word, as we meditate upon the word, as we begin to live out the word.

[18 : 13] That God, the spirit, is taking the word and making it live in us because Christ is in us. Amen. You can never respect the Bible too much.

You can never spend too much time in the word of God. You see, people say too much of a good thing is a bad thing. Not when it comes to the word of God. Amen.

Paul had preached about this new life. And the sword went to work in their hearts. Remember how our Lord Jesus prayed?

In what I call the true Lord's Prayer. His high priestly prayer in John 17, 17. He said to the Father, Sanctify them by thy truth.

Your word is truth. Make them new. Make them like me. Make them holy. Help them to walk in a way that honors you.

[19 : 23] Through your word. Your word. How you respond to the word says much about your spiritual condition. Amen. You see, the word is the spirit's sword to get to the core of our problems.

Amen. Amen. To the core. To the center. Like I said, down deep. But Paul describes this core problem very uniquely.

I think 2 Corinthians 5, 14 and 15. Here's what he says. For the love of God controls us. Oh, another beautiful truth.

Thank you. Let it be so. Let the love of Christ controls us. Because we have concluded this. That one has died for all. Therefore, all have died. And he died for all.

That those who live, here it is, might no longer live for themselves. But for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[20 : 30] Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Listen, if you've been given a helmet of salvation, then a new power is at work in you called the love of Christ.

Yes. Yes. Yes. The love of Christ controls us. This love is seeking to exert all the time a controlling influence in your life.

It's like the spirit of God is whispering in your ear every day. I love you. I love you. Can you hear me?

I love you. Always reminding you that he loves you. Listen, why is this necessary? Because the root of our sin is self-love.

We tend to live for ourselves. Remember, he said that we might no longer live. That's what Christ has done in saving us.

[21 : 35] His love comes that we might no longer live for ourselves. That's who we are. We love the core of our problem. We love ourselves.

That's why when people say there are three commandments, love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, love your neighbor as yourself. And then they say, you got to love yourself.

Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me? That's the problem. We all know you love you.

You know I love me. I can look at you and tell you you love you. Look at you. Hair, comb, nice clothes, probably smelling good.

I bet you fed yourself too. Are you going to feed yourself? You can't wait to get out here to feed yourself. Listen, I'm telling you, our problem, Paul says, is that we tend to live for ourselves.

[22 : 33] And now this sovereign love of Christ has come to deliver us from that. Our problem isn't that we don't love ourselves.

Our problem, which is what the commandments are about, is that we don't love God and we don't love our neighbor. That's the problem. So when someone tells you you got to love yourself, they're just adding to the problem.

I can't get through the people on this one. I know I'm trying, but no one listens. No one listens. It's good psychobabble, but bad theology. Bad Bible. We are all, as I love Paul Tripp, we are all self-sovereigns.

We're all self-sovereigns. Sin causes this self-sovereignty to live in all of us. We tend to want more control than we are wise enough or strong enough to handle.

We want people to follow our way and stay out of our way. But when we wish for these things, we are forgetting who we are, who God is, and what grace has blessed us with.

[23 : 44] We are always even mourning the fact that we're not getting our way. Or celebrating that grace welcomes us to a new and better way. We're either frustrated that we lack control or resting in the one who is head over all things to the church.

You're either upset that you can't have your way, or you're resting in the fact that God is having his. Come on, somebody.

Thank you. I got two amens of grunt and some head nods. Thank you very much. It's just amazing. Listen, I know this stuff. I know this feeling. I know this experience.

He's talking about me. I get so angry when I can't have my way. And I have to go, Lord, help me.

And God is gracious and kind to remind us that he's the only sovereign, the only wise potentate, the only one in control.

[24 : 54] And the more you and I fight for control, the more frustrated we will become. But the sword of the Spirit causes Christ's controlling love to confront us, reminding us of his death and resurrection for us.

So I'm just going back over that verse you just saw on the screen. He died so that we who live might no longer live for ourselves.

He died to deliver us from us. Beautiful. Thank you, Lord.

If you know him to have died and risen for you, then you should know that he did this so that you can stop living for yourself and live for him.

Live for him. Live for him. The Christian life is about living for him. For his kingdom.

[26 : 01] For his glory. To know what it means to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And knowing that everything else we need will be added unto us. What we really need, God will supply.

But the question is, are we consumed by his love so that we seek him first? He died because we love ourselves more than him.

And we love ourselves more than our neighbor. Now, some of you are probably asking, I put this in my notes, it's right there. Why is Rev Kev talking about the sword's effect on us?

Shouldn't he be talking about how to fight the devil with the sword? That's a great question. I'm so glad you asked that. That's beautiful. I think it's a beautiful question.

I think James is helpful here. James 1, 14 and 15. But each person is tempted when he's lured and enticed by his own desire.

[27 : 04] Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. Here's the rub. The devil's attacks are effective because they latch onto something in our hearts.

Do you see the text? Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. The devil isn't trying to bombard you.

Now, he'll bombard you from the outside. He'll try to hit you, you know, with persecution and that kind of stuff. But his greatest attacks, he's aiming at your heart. He's got spiritual weaponry.

And he's aiming at our hearts. He's aiming what he knows you want and desire more than anything. And so we need the sword of the Spirit to... We can't use the sword on ourselves.

I keep thinking about... I just had a vision of that Rambo movie where he does surgery on himself, you know. Real tough guy stuff.

[28 : 17] He's got a bullet wound. He goes in there with a super, super knife. He cuts out the bullet. He's breathing. Then he takes a bullet, pulls out the gunpowder, puts it in the wound.

Then he sets it on fire. And you see these flames. That's us! We take the sword of the Spirit and we say, Lord, do this surgery.

We can't trust ourselves with it too well, by the way. We try our best, but you just say, Lord, here's the Word. You come to the Word. Doctor, Dr. Jesus, I surrender to you.

Use your sword. Use your Word. And see, he takes the sword of the Spirit to work on our own hearts to protect and repair the damage the enemy is doing.

And listen, here's the beautiful thing. When he does that, the enemy's attack is repelled. It's beautiful. When I'm hit by the enemy and I'm enticed and I'm drawn away and I fall into sin, the Word of God comes, the Spirit of God.

[29 : 38] Maybe I'm reading it. Maybe I'm hearing a sermon. Maybe I'm remembering something. Or maybe one of my children. You ever been convicted?

Okay, talking to parents. You ever been convicted by one of your children? Who actually remembered the Bible you taught them? They can barely lift the sword.

And they will hit you with the sword of the Spirit. They bring the Word back to you. They bring the Word back to you. Maybe some of you remember doing it with your parents. You brought the Word back to mom and dad.

And God takes it and wheels it to excise the cancerous wound the enemy has hit you with, right?

Excise that. And then when he does it, you repent. And so the enemy is repulsed once again. It's a beautiful thing. And anyone can wield the sword of the Spirit.

[30 : 39] You don't have to be 90 years old. You don't have to be a pastor who went to seminary. Any child of God, even the children of the children of God, can wield the sword of the Spirit.

Even sometimes the world does. They don't have the power, but the Word is powerful all by itself. And we find ourselves being convicted by people who don't even believe the Word themselves.

Because the Word of God is still the sword of the Spirit. Now, whenever you are attempting to learn a new skill, it helps to have someone who is good show you how to do it.

To me, it's Daniel Rakes in disc golf. I watch Daniel. He was at a 2-1 tournament recently. I was there cheering him on.

Man, good form. Boy, sweet. He can throw, y'all. He's so... Kyle. I was with Kyle. Kyle. Oh, the other day. And one of our guys here at the church and Mike.

[31 : 53] We were out there and watching these guys throw. Mike is a... What's that thing? Ultimate Frisbee guy. Man, he can throw, man. And Kyle, he's...

Me throw disc. Wham! It took me two or three shots to get where he went with one. It's good to watch people who know how to do what you're trying to learn.

And I don't know about you. There's no better swordsman I know than Jesus. I'm going to leave you with this thought and we're going to come back and dive into it even more.

For Jesus is the greatest swordsman who ever lived. Revelation 1.16. In his right hand he held seven stars. From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.

Sound familiar? And his face was like the sun shining in full strength. Listen. Our Lord wills that sword in two ways in the book of Revelation. Two ways.

[32 : 56] You see that double-edged sword going out from his mouth. He's speaking the word of God. Watch this. To discipline his church. Or those in his church who tolerate false doctrine.

And false doctrine leads to ungodly living, by the way. That's the church of Pergamum. He said. This is not on the screen, so listen. Revelation 2.16.

He says to that church, Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. He's telling those who are falling into false teaching and therefore into ungodly living.

He's saying, if you don't repent, I will come and I will fight against you. Talking to the church. I will fight against you with the sword of my mouth. Then in Revelation, you see he uses the sword against the ungodly nations.

Revelation 19.15 and 16. Hear it again. Then from his mouth comes a sharp sword which was to strike down the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron.

[34 : 04] He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

How will he defeat the nations? The judgment of the word of God. He will... It gets worse.

In 19 verse 21, he explains what he means. After the beast and the false prophet had been taken away and cast into the lake of fire, he says this about those...

This is the battle of Armageddon. And the rest... And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who sits on the horse. And all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

The final... The final... The judgment has come. And the judgment will be done through the word of Christ.

[35 : 10] Listen, saints. He is doing it. He will do it. It must be done because it is written.

The two-edged sword for now brings healing as well as judgment. Healing. Healing for us. And we are blessed, but there will come a time when that sword will not bring healing again.

It will bring judgment. May God help us to be found. Flayed right now. I'm saying, Lord, just...

I feel like Peter. Peter said, wash everything, Lord. Don't just wash my feet. I'm like, Lord, just take your word. Hit me. I'm just... Creating me a pure heart.

Renew a right spirit in me. Amen. And that is the good news. That he does it because he loves us. Father, in Jesus' name, Lord, we thank you for your word. And now, we pray for those who may have to leave right now.

[36 : 28] They're on the stream. Lord, we pray your blessings upon those who may have to leave with us. And some will stay and watch. But, Lord, we pray your blessings upon them. Your grace upon them as they go. May you teach them more and more how the will of the sword of the spirit.

May they find hope in Jesus each and every day. And be with us now as we come to the table. Oh, Lord, may we feast upon Christ.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Please make sure you have your little cups.

You can start peeling off the top now until you'll be ready. That first film is a little tricky sometimes. That passage in Corinthians that we live in.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[37 : 51] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Am I. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.