

Built for the Battle: God's Strategy for Victory"

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[0 : 00] Beloved, if you have your Bible this morning, please turn to Ephesians chapter 6, starting at verse 10.

! Finally, finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

! Put on the whole arm 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 rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmos powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole arm of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day. And have done all to stand. Stand therefore having to fasten on the belt of truth, having put on the breast plate 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, which you shall extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Lord, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication to that end. Keep alert with all preservation, making supplication for all the saints. Beloved, that is the Word of God.

Let us pray. Father, we come this morning. First of all, we ask you to give Sister Glenda grace this morning.

[2 : 17] Give us strength. Lord, may it for she is depending upon you, as we all are. Lord, may your Word go forth this day.

May it convict where it need to convict. May it strengthen where it need to strengthen. May it encourage where we need to be encouraged. May it transform our lives.

May it be less of us and more of you. All this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Beloved, when I was in the military going through basic training, and in the middle of my basic training, I was stationed at Fort Benning.

And at the middle of that training, the whole base went on alert. In the middle of our training. And it hit me as I was looking to my left.

And to my left, I was stationed in the area called Sand Hill. And to my left, that was a big black building. And that's where the airborne rangers trained at.

[3 : 51] And it hit me as this base came under alert. And as I saw these airborne rangers packing up, getting ready to get on these helicopters, go to this war that we've been assigned to.

This is real. This is real. No, we want to play soldier, but this is real stuff. When you see folks, when you see the airborne rangers getting ready, packing up, get on these helicopters, this stuff became real to me.

It's not just playtime anymore. Beloved, hear me this morning. This world we live in is at war.

And this war is spiritual. This war is for your souls. This war is for your mind, your heart, your destiny.

It's a war of truth versus lies. Light versus darkness. Holy versus compromising.

- [5 : 07] It's a war that rages in the headlines. It's in your homes. It's in the culture. It's in your conscience. And if you don't know that you're in the fight, you have already lost.
- Paul said, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rudeness of darkness, and spiritual weaknesses, witness in high places.
- This is not a metaphor. This is not mythology. This is warfare. Angels are fighting.
- Demons are scheming. Light is clashing with darkness. Good is standing against evil. And please don't get it twisted.
- It's real. The people are real. The problems that we deal with are real. But they are not the root of the problem. Yet, too many saints are sleepwalking through this battlefield.
- [6 : 19] They treat the devil like a cartoon. They treat sin like some kind of proposal. They treat spiritual warfare like some kind of superstitious.
- Let me break it down to you for this morning. That discouragement you feel, that's warfare. That divorce that broke your heart this morning, that's warfare.
- That addiction, that anger, that depression, that debt, it's all warfare. We are wrestling down here with confusion, conflict, chaos, but it all started up there.
- That pain in your heart, that pressure in your home, that problem that's on your job, it is not just physical, it is spiritual.
- You think it's stress. No, it's not stress. You think it's bad luck.
- [7 : 24] Just a rough season. Beloved, it's warfare. It's the ripple effect of a cosmic battle.
- It's the fallout of a fight that you cannot see, but you show enough fear. Because what happened in the heavenlies don't stay in the heavenlies. It manifests itself in your marriage, your mind, your money, your ministry.
- That tension that's in your spirit, that tug of war between truth and deception. Saints of the living God, don't just patch the pain.
- Discern the source of the pain. Don't just medicate the moment. Question the movement. Because what you feel in your body may be rooted in your spirit.
- What's showing up in your house may be coming from the heaven. What's breaking down in your life might be a backlash of a battle that you don't know you're even in.
- [8 : 34] Discernment. It's the difference between surviving and overcoming. It's the line between reacting to the mess and rebuking the madness.
- It's the gap between confusion and chaos and confronting the cause behind the chaos. You don't just need sight, we need insight.
- Insight. We just don't need eyes, we need discernment. So stop slapping that band-aid on that spiritual blood wound.
- Stop calling warfare bad vibes. Stop blaming people for what is really principalities and powers and rulers of darkness. Because when you discern the source, you will start fighting the shadows and start swinging at the strongholds.
- This is why we need discernment. Even in the confusion of identity today, the lies of what a marriage is, the rebellion against God's design, listen, that's all warfare.
- [9 : 46] This is why we need the armor of God. This is why we need grace to fight for us. So, don't be passive.
- Don't be blind and don't be silent. I'm going to show you this morning by the grace of God why you need to strap on truth.

Why you need to cover yourself up in Christ's righteousness. why you need to walk in peace. Why you need to lift up that shield of faith and take the heaven of salvation and use God's word.

Because this war ain't just about today. It's about eternity. It's about the kingdom of God advancing in the face of hell resistance.

Paul said, therefore, take up the whole armor of God. that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and have done all to stand from.

[10 : 54] Paul keeps saying it. Stand. Don't run. Don't retreat. Stand.

That means stay planted in the place where the victory has already been won. Stay covered.

Stay closed. Stay ready. See, when you are under a shelter, that shelter doesn't stop the rain from falling.

but it still does stop the rain from falling on you. The storm may rage but you stay dry.

The wind may blow but you stay covered. The battle may intensify but you stay protected. And that's what the armor of God does.

[11 : 52] It is your spiritual shelter. It won't stop the attacks but it stops the enemy from getting through. It won't cancel the conflict but it keeps from being consumed by the conflict.

So hear me this morning. You got to get dressed for this thing called the Christian life. You can't walk into warfare wearing wishful thoughts.

Our enemy is going to try to disarm you, disconnect you, separate you from God and his word with darkness and deception.

Because this is not a fashion show, y'all. It's a fight. And if you're not dressed for the battle you will be exposed in the storm. Listen, in 1965, 1965, 1965, Paul Harvey did a radio broadcast called If I Was the Devil.

Anybody remember that? Paul Harvey warned of the danger of more decay than the devil's strategies to take over the world. Listen to these words of Paul Harvey.

[13 : 17] They should be up there. Listen to these words of Paul Harvey. this is back in 1965. If I were the devil, if I were the devil, if I were the prince of darkness, I want to engulf the whole world in darkness.

I have a third of his real estate, four fifth of his population, but I wouldn't be happy until I seize the ripest apple on the tree, thee.

So I set about however necessary to take over the United States. I subvert the churches first. I begin with a campaign of whispers. With the wisdom of a serpent, I will whisper to you as I whisper to Eve, do as you please.

To the young, I will whisper that the Bible is a myth. I will convince them that man created God instead of the other way around. I will tell them what's bad is good and what good is square.

And to all, I will teach to pray after me, our father, which are in Washington. And then I get organized. I educate authors in how to make fleshly literature exciting so that anyone else will, anything else will appear dull and uninteresting.

[14 : 39] I threaten TV, I threaten TV with dirty movies and vice versa. I tell a narcotics to whom I could. I sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction.

I tranquilize the rest with pills. If I were the devil, I soon have family that war with themselves, churches that war with themselves, and nation that war with themselves, until each in its turn was consumed.

And with the promise of hiding ratings, I have the meeting of famine to flames. If I were the devil, I would encourage schools to refine young intellect, but neglect the disciplined emotion.

Just let those run wild until before you know it, you have to have drugs-sniffing dogs and a metal detector at every schoolhouse door. Within a decade, I have prisons overflowing.

I have judge-promoting pornography. Soon I could evict God from the courthouse, then from the schoolhouse, and then from the House of Congress. And in its own church, I would substitute psychology for religion and deified science.

[15 : 43] I would lute priests and pastors into a misusing boys and girls and church money. If I were the devil, I would make the symbol of Easter a egg and assemble a Christian a bottle. If I were the devil, I'd take those who have and give to those who won't until I have killed the incentive of ambition.

And what do you beg? I could get whole states to promote gambling as the way to get rich. I would caution against extreme hard work and patriotism and moral conduct.

I would convince that young, that marriage is old-fashioned, that swinging is more fun. And what you see on TV is the way to be. And thus, I could undress you in public and lure you into bed with diseases for which there is no cure.

In other words, if I was a devil, I'd just keep right on doing what I'm doing. Beloved, that was written back in 1965.

1965 was that written. What is going on today? Let me break it down for you. Spirit warfare is not just some churchy phrase.

[17 : 05] Let me break it down some more for you. The real battle is not just around you. It's in you. It's on you.

And it is after you. And hear me this morning. Nobody is exempt from this. This war is not just in the streets.

It's not just on TikTok and it. It ain't just in the outlets or the headlines. The devil is not wasting time with places he has already lost and worn.

He's come from places that we call holy. He is showing up in the sanctuary. He is dressing up in religion.

He is hiding in tradition. He is whispering in the choir choir loss. He's not out partying on Saturday night.

[18 : 08] He went to bed early Saturday night. They could be on time for church on Sunday. because the enemy knows if he can corrupt the pulpit he can confuse the people.

If he can twist the truth he can trap the saints. And if he can make church comfortable he can make conviction optional.

The battle is spiritual and it is surgical. It cuts deep. It targets the heart. It infiltrates worship and it disguises itself in praise.

Beloved discern the spirit. Test the fruit. Watch the doctrine.

Because the devil ain't just walking in darkness. he's walking in the light. Hope you don't see his shadow. Saints of the living God hear me now.

[19 : 24] This might make and shake up some of y'all theology. But I'm going to say it anyway. Sometimes sometimes not not all the time but sometimes the most dangerous place to be on Sunday morning is the church house.

Not because the building is cursed. Not because the pews are poison. Because the enemy knows if he can infiltrate the place of truth he can deceive the people of God.

He walks right in. He dressed in tradition. He speak Christian needs very well. And he sits down like he belongs.

He is not just stirring up sin in the streets. He is throwing division in the sanctuary. because where the word of God is preached the war is present.

Where truth is declared lies try to sneak in. Where holiness is lifted up compromise tries to creep low. We worry about bad shutting down bad schools bad confidence.

[20 : 47] We worry about shutting down folks with a bad reputation. And yes we should be concerned by all those things. But let me tell you what we really need to shut down more than anything else.

We need to shut down all this slander that goes on in the church. We need to shut down all this backbiting that goes down in the church.

We need to shut down that ministry damaged people reputation in the church. Shut that stuff down. Shut down all the backbiting and the shade throwing society that we have in the churches.

Because where churches are busy pouring a finger at the world, the devil is throwing a party in the pool. But Lord, if we want to clean up the streets, we need to start by cleaning up our spirits.

If we want revival in the city, the church needs to start with repentance in the sanctuary. Because the devil ain't just working in the world, he's working in the worship.

[21 : 51] church. He's not just stirring up chaos in the culture, he's stirring up chaos in the vision in the church. Wherever the word of God goes forth, wherever truth is being preached, wherever holiness is being lifted up, that is where the battle is going on.

That is where the enemy wants to strike. That is where he wants to sow confusion. That is where he wants to plant the offense. that is where he wants to silence conviction.

But hear me, church, that's also where the saints of God must stand. Stand in unity, stand in truth, stand in grace, and stand in love.

Because if we don't stand in the sanctuary, we will fall in the streets. If we don't guard this altar, we will lose the city. And if we don't shut down all the backbiting and envy, we'll shout, but there'll be no glory.

So, church, let's rise up. Let's clean the house. Let's close ranks, and let's let the devil know in this house, this is holy ground.

[23 : 11] Okay, okay. Somebody saying, I hear you, I hear you talking. Somebody saying, man, what are you talking about? What are you talking about? Okay, okay. Let's rewind the tape.

Okay, let's rewind the tape. Let's go back to Jerusalem. Jerusalem. The night our Savior was betrayed. Let me ask you a question. What was the most dangerous place?

Was it in the back alleys with all the criminals? Was it in the temple court with the Pharisees scheming in secret? No, no, no, no, no.

The most dangerous place in all of Jerusalem that night was in the upper room. Right there with Jesus. What? Why? Because that is where the devil clothed in at, right there.

He clothed in right there. That's where Satan punched his time card and went to work. That's where Judas got possessed. That's where Peter started denying Jesus, not with his lips, but in his heart.

[24 : 18] The enemy wasn't creeping around the streets. He was passing the plate in the sanctuary. He wasn't looting outside the gates. He was lifting hands in fellowship.

The devil didn't sneak through the alleys. He sat down at the table and guess what? He said grace. And if Judas could speak right now today, this is what he'll say.

He said, I was there. If Peter could testify right now, Peter said, I felt the temptation on me. The devil was not in the streets.

He was sitting at the table. And if it happened there, don't you dare think it can't happen here. Don't think that.

Because it can. Can't. don't dare think the sanctuary is safe just because it's sacred. Don't you dare think this table is sacred just because it's set.

[25 : 25] Because where Jesus is present, the enemy is prowling around. I'm going to keep saying this. Wherever truth is proclaimed, deception is scheming.

wherever glory is near, warfare is real. So check the room, check your heart, and check the table.

Because the devil don't mind your nearness to power. He just want access to your weakness. C.S.

Lewis warned us. C.S. Lewis says Satan's greatest trick is convincing the world that he doesn't exist.

That's his greatest trick. He's the master of delusion. He is. He's the master of delusion. You can't, you can't, you can't, you can't just, you just can't get around him with this delusion.

[26 : 28] Church, he has done this stuff well. We turn the devil into a cartoon. We may rich, which is cute. We may death a cartoon in a costume and we call all that stuff entertainment.

Brothers and sisters, it's time to wake up. This ain't the kind of enemy you can reason with. You can't negotiate with this enemy.

You can't sit down and slap ideas over coffee at Starbucks with his enemy. You can't bring him into the boardroom and hope for compromise. This enemy of ours has one object, one objective, just one, and that is to make you ineffective for the kingdom of God.

to distract you, to discourage you, to destroy you on something else, to drain you of power, your purpose, and your praise.

He doesn't want to destroy your body. He wants to paralyze your calling. He doesn't want to take your life. He wants to steal your witness.

[27 : 50] He doesn't want to stop you from going to church. He just want to make sure church will never get into you. This is war.

This is spiritual, and this is urgent. Beloved, put on the arm of God.

Take up the spirit and fight like your purpose depends on it. Because it does. Look at this arm.

We're going to look at this arm this morning. Paul is telling us to put it on. That you may be able to stand against the schemes, the tricks of the devil.

The first three pieces of this armor, truth, righteousness, and peace, those pieces of the armor must be worn at all times. You cannot take them off.

[28 : 52] I'm sorry, you just can't do it. They are to stay on you at all time. I don't care if you sleep and sleep with it. That is your daily uniform.

That is your spiritual base coat. You don't take those pieces off, period. You don't hang them up at the end of your services. You wear them in the grocery store, you wear them in the workplace, your home, you wear them in your thoughts.

Now, the last three pieces, faith, salvation, and the spirit of God, which is his word, those are your weapons that you keep near you. You pick them up when you are ready to fight or if fight breaks out.

You lift that shield when the projectiles start flying. You put on that helmet when lies start swirling around. And you swing that sword when the enemy gets too close.

Now, let's look at this first piece, the belt of truth. Saints, too many Christians today are sagging in the culture.

[30 : 04] Y'all know what sagging is, right? Too many Christians are sagging this morning. The reason why we are sagging is because our belt is too loose. Too many Christians are sagging.

The belt's too loose. We are sagging on the weight of this culture, y'all. Too many are losing their stance, their strength, and their sanctification. When a Roman soldier stepped on the battlefield, he didn't come sloppy or slow.

No, sir, he tightened that belt up and he got ready to move. That belt was not just for fashion, it was for function. that belt held everything together so he could fight with freedom, he can move with purpose, and he can stand in strength.

And child of God, if you're going to stand in this spiritual war, you better tighten up that belt. You better tighten that belt up. Don't let compromise slow you down.

Fix yourself with the word, fasten it with faith, because you can't stand if you're sagging. You just can't do it. I never forget watching, you ever watch that show of cops?

[31 : 24] I'm seeing this guy trying to run, his pants all down here, he's trying to run, I'm thinking he ain't going nowhere. Oh, they caught him before he got the corner. He's just sagging, in fact he can run with sagging pants, you can't do it.

Listen, that was a general who was wise and ruthless. He told his man, don't shoot the enemy, cut the belt.

He said, don't shoot him, just cut the belt. And when morning came, the enemy was so busy holding their pants, they can hold their weapons. they lost the battle before their first bullet even flew.

That's how the devil fights, y'all. That's how he fights. He's not always coming for your sword, he's coming for your belt. He wants to lose your grip on truth.

He wants you to, he wants your conviction to sag. he wants your doctrine to sag. Because if he can get you to let go of the truth, everything else in your life will fall apart.

[32 : 43] Everything. He's after that truth. I'm going to give you a definition of truth. Tony said it's truth. I just love this. I love this. Truth is the absolute standard by which reality is measured.

Did y'all catch that? I did. I caught that one. Truth is the standard by which reality is measured.

I don't care what you're thinking, what you're saying, if it ain't based on truth, that's not reality. Okay? In other words, it is God's view on every subject.

Let me break it down for you. truth is God's take on every matter, from the pulpit to the pavement, from the sanctuary to the streets.

It's having verdict on heaven, on earth debates. Did you catch that? Truth is the standard, truth is the measure, truth is the plumb line by which reality is judged.

[33 : 57] God's word is the truth, truth. And that's the truth. It's the truth. God's word is the truth. That's it. This is not off a debate.

This is not off a debate. To where truth is like a belt is to walk in integrity before God. It means you are living, you are not living in fantasies.

You're not hiding in falsehood. You're not dressing up in deception. temptation. You are living in reality. You are living in God reality. The more truth is attacked, the tighter we ought to hold it up.

Just like a man hold his coat when the wind starts blowing hard, the harder it blows, the closer he pulls it in. And that's how we ought to treat the truth of the word of God.

Don't let the word block you. don't let this word disregard God what you take seriously. If the world casts it off, the faithful soldier of Christ must treasure it all the more.

[35 : 06] And the storm is the proof, the storm of your life is the proof that the truth is still in you. The storm of your life proves that.

The Bible is not just a book, it is the bedrock of truth. It's the final authority, it's the last word, it's the holy gravel that settle every dispute.

The word of God doesn't bend to culture, it doesn't bow to opinion, and it sure don't blink in the face of compromise. It is the divine judgment of what is right, what is real, and what is righteous.

When the world gets dark, the word of God stays clear. When the lines get crooked, the word of God draws a straight line.

And when folks start calling right, wrong, and wrong, and right, the word of God still stands tall and says, thus said the Lord. So root yourself in truth, not in social media truth that changes with the headlines, not in emotional truth that shift with your feelings.

[36 : 21] And by the way, you know you can feel a certain way. You can feel a certain way and you still be wrong. Do you know your feelings can trick you? Do you know your feelings can deceive you?

You can feel a certain way like I feel like this is right. Yeah, you might feel that way, but you can still be wrong. Your feelings will deceive you. Stay with the truth.

Beloved, listen, when the winds of dishonest start to blow, it won't be your opinion that keep you standing, it will be the word of God.

So the better truth holds everything together. You must put on truth. Now once the better truth is on, now it's time to put on a breath plate of righteousness.

And guess what, brothers and sisters, that is not optional. It's crucial. Now don't confuse this righteousness with simple morality. No, this is not just being nice and being polite.

[37 : 25] Here in this morning, and don't get this twisted, our righteousness is not earned, it's not deserved, and should not, it's not self-made. Our righteousness is not our own.

It was imputed to us, not improved, it was given, not gathered. God took the spotless, sinless, perfect righteousness for Jesus Christ, and he laid it on us like a holy rope.

So when the father looks at you and look at me, he doesn't see our mess, our mistakes, our missed moments. He sees the majesty of his son. He sees the blood-brought righteousness.

He sees the Christ-certified holiness. He sees the resurrection wrapped up in perfection. blood, that's all grace. That's the gospel.

The mirror of imputation. God's put Christ's record on our resume. Christ's goodness is in our accounts, and Christ's righteousness is on our name.

[38 : 33] Ain't that some good news? Now, the breath plate of righteousness is your defense. It guards your hearts, your soul, your center.

The best way to fight temptation is to cultivate goodness. Righteous habits are holiness armor. An untended field grows weeds.

A tool unused will rust, but a hard-dressing righteousness is hard to penetrate. So, what do we do? What do we do? How do we do this?

We suit up daily. We remind ourselves, I am the righteousness of God in Christ. We walk in integrity. We move with compassion.

We pursue holiness. And when we mess up, and we will mess up, y'all, when we mess up, we repent quickly. We shut the door, we seal the cracks, and we guard the heart.

[39 : 39] That's what you do. Because we don't fight for victory, we fight from it. Oh, y'all missed that one too. Okay, okay. The war has been won.

The armor has been issued. Now, he's telling you, stand from child of God, and let righteousness of God do the talking. Now, it's time to walk.

Once you got the truth in the armor, now we got to do some walking. Okay, we got to stop all this crawling around and sit up and start walking. As shoes for your feet, put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Roman soldiers didn't wear flip-flops in the battle. They didn't wear no flip-flops. They put on sandals with cleats. These sandals was gripped in the ground, traction in the trial, stable in the storm.

Why? So they could stand their ground when the enemy came in charging. Every soldier needs solid footing. Every warrior needs a good grip.

[40 : 52] Every believer in the battle needs shoes that hold from when the wind blow and the ground starts shaking. Okay? Let me break it down for you. What kind of shoes does a football player wear?

What kind of shoes does a football player wear? He wears cleats. Thank you. He wears cleats. Why cleats? Because cleats give spikes underneath. Those little teeth that bite into the dirt and grab the grass.

What it does, it help him to move fast when it's time to run. Without cleats, every football player would slip and slide on the field when it's wet. I remember in Baptist training, they taught us hand to hand combat.

And if your feet wasn't planted, if your feet was not planted the right way, you wasn't ready, you wasn't ready, you wasn't protected. Your stance, your defense stance help you to stand when you are in hand to hand combat.

So your feet has to be anchored in Christ. So the question is, are you standing on solid ground of the gospel? Are you sliding with fear?

[42 : 04] Are you standing in peace? Because when all hell break loose, and it will at times, when the winds of confusion blows, and when the culture starts shaking, peace is what keeps you planted.

The kind of peace that doesn't come from everything going your way. It comes from sanctification. It's the peace that flows from righteous living.

The peace that whispered in your ear when the midnight hour, and God said, you in my will, just keep on walking. Anybody heard that before? Oh, I can tell you some stories.

So we have to walk through the fire, walk through the fight, walk through the fog, because your footing is firm, the gospel is sure, your peace is proof that God got you covered.

Now hear me, the Bible said we need footwear of the gospel of peace. That's our cleats. That's our grip. That's our grounding.

[43 : 07] And this peace, this holy traction is only found in Jesus. Not in religion, not in reputation, only in Jesus. But Lord, hear me, we don't just carry the gospel, we proclaim the gospel.

we just don't hold truth, we proclaim truth. Every blood-washed soldier must be ready to speak life, to preach peace, and to declare deliverance.

I used to work for the Montgomery Police Department. And this particular night, I'm upstairs filling out reports.

I'm at this table filling out reports. And this officer was on the phone. and she's on the phone talking to her son.

Now, minding, I'm minding my business, y'all. I'm just minding my business. She's on the phone talking to her son. And she is just going at her son on that phone.

[44 : 18] I mean, she was calling her son every name in the book. Again, I'm minding my business, y'all. I'm just minding my business. I'm filling out these reports, okay? I didn't open my mouth.

And she get off the phone. And she turned to me. And she said, Officer Tolliver, that boy of mine is so bad. Now, she just put me in on that morning.

She's pulling me in. I'm trying to mind my own business. Lord, I'm trying to mind my own business. But when she turned to me, and she asked me a question, that boy of mine is so bad, I just turned to her.

And I just looked at her, and these are the words I said. I said, oh, oh, oh, he's not a bad boy. He's just a sinner. And these are the words that she told me.

These are the words she said to me. Now, listen to me. I told her, her boy is not a bad boy. He's just a sinner. She looked at me, right in my face, she said, now, you went too far with that one.

[45 : 22] You went too far calling him a, yeah, he's bad, but he ain't that bad. These are my words to her.

Yes, he is. And so are you. But I got some good news though. Jesus died for you, your boy, and me.

And if you repent of your sin and turn to him, he'll deliver you. You cannot be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I don't care where you're at, I don't care who you're talking to, don't be ashamed to give out the gospel.

Do you hear me this morning? Okay, okay. In verse 16, Paul said in all circumstances, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the fiery darts, of the evil one.

What is faith? Faith is stepping out like God is telling the truth. Even when your feelings say otherwise.

[46 : 38] Have anybody been there before? You know what God is telling you, but you just don't feel it though. I'm about myself in this here. I'm about myself. You know God is telling you to do something but you don't feel it.

Oh, I'm going to be by myself this morning. Okay. Faith is stepping like God is telling the truth even when you don't feel it. Faith is obeying God's view on the issue and not yours, not theirs, and not the cultural opinion.

Faith is saying if God said it, I'm standing on it. Because when the devil comes shooting those fiery darts, you know those darts, temptation and confusion, you don't fight back with feelings.

You fight back by faith. Faith is your shield. Your attitude is your shout. It's not passive, it's powerful.

It's not soft, it is supernatural. Listen, faith is acting like you put in a heaven's fire extinguisher.

[47 : 48] You know, heaven's got a fire extinguisher. You pull that pin and it puts all those fire dots out. That's how faith acts. Beloved, listen, we must walk, believe the word of God and watch the devil flee when you act on faith.

My son David, I'm going to question y'all know David. When David was a little baby, he had asthma real bad to the point we had to put him in the hospital.

He put him in the hospital. Beloved, my wife had to work full-time and I told her she called one day her job.

She said, my son is sick. I can't count the word. Her job said her job come first. Yeah, yeah, yeah, okay. And I told my wife to quit her job.

For two weeks, she struggled with that for two weeks. Two weeks. She finally came home one day and she said, she walked through the door and she said, I quit. And when she said, I quit, the phone rang.

[49 : 01] Phone rang. Walked through the door, I quit. Miss Todd, you got another job full-time? When she walked out on faith, God moved.

Beloved, faith is acting like God is telling the truth on these issues. That's what faith is. Now, let's move on because I'm running out of time. I'm running out of time. The heaven of salvation is the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

That heaven guards your heart, it guards your mind, it guards your thought, it guards your decision because the battlefield is your brain. It's where the enemy can confuse your thinking. It can corrupt your living but when you know you are in Christ, your mind is covered, your thoughts is anchored and your identity is secure.

So brothers and sisters, we must put it on. We must put this heaven on knowing that we are saved in Christ. Walk in that truth.

So I'm going to wrap this up real quick because I'm running out of time. Paul said after all that we're going to wrap all this stuff up with prayer. Prayer is not an afterthought but a divine initial switch.

[50 : 14] Prayer is how you put on the armor. It's how you activate the power. How you stay connected to the commander-in-chief. It's not just worry, it's warfare. It's not just ritual, it's relationship.

Prayer is the hotline to heaven, the lifeline, the battle, the breath of the believer. So the question is how often should we pray? Pastor pray at all times and all manners and everything because prayer is how we access our spiritual resources.

It's how we download peace and how we upload praise. It's how we sink our soul with the Savior. Prayer is how we walk in victory in Christ. It has he always won.

So don't just wear the armor, pray it on. Don't just talk about Jesus, talk to him. Because when the saints pray heaven moves, hells tremble, hells tremble, and the church stands strong.

let me leave you with this last point. A little boy one day was trying to pick up a rock.

[51 : 16] His dad said, he said to his dad, dad, it's too heavy. I can't pick it up. He said, son, you can do it. You can do it. You can pick it up. The boy strained and tried, but he said, dad, the rock is too heavy.

The father insists, son, you can do it. He tried again. Dad, it's too heavy. He said, son, you are not using all your strength.

Dad, I am, it's too heavy. Son, you are not using all your strength. Dad, why are you continuing telling me I'm not using all my strength? The rock is too heavy.

I know you're not using all your strength because you haven't asked me to help you yet. But Lord, there is most strength developed to you and to me.

Be strong in the might of his power and not yours. Do we get that? I want to say so much more, but I don't have time.

[52 : 16] I know I don't have time. It's so much in this, it's so much in this, but you don't have time. Be strong in God's might, not your own. Let's pray, let's pray.

O Lord, the day is yours, the night is yours, the heaven shouts your glory and the earth echoes your praise.

Deliver us, Lord, from worldly ways and wandering hearts. For we have been born from above and we are bound for glory. Teach us to set to see holiness not as a burden but as beauty, not as a restriction but as dignity.

Let our souls long for it like a thirsty land long for rain. Lord, don't let us sleep on duty. Don't let us lose our confidence or forget our armor when we are walking through the enemy territory.

Dress us for every season, every scene, every storm. Keep our minds stayed on you. And when trials come knocking, turn them into blessings so we can lift hands in gratitude and open our mouths in praise knowing you are working all things for good.

[53 : 36] Make our being holy and natural and full of joy. Strengthen our thinking with clear consciousness, spirit-led truth. Don't let us slip and slide over any part of your word.

Every commandment, every promise, every page is precious. Sanctify us, Lord, in every role we play, every deal we make, every place we go. If you bless us, keep us humble.

If we suffer, hold us steady. Balance our heart in every high and low and shape our spirit so that every duty become a privilege, every task become worship and let us be content.

Let us be a reflection of your glory and let us be an example that point others to you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.