

Fight with the Sword! 3

From Peacetime to War

(preached 10/03/21)

Sermon #1: Words Matter

- The Church is meant to be the conscience of both the State AND the community.
- If we're truly a Light meant to shine into darkness, we cannot do that by being silent and only quoting how much God loves people.
- We must speak the words of the Scriptures to decry evil and exalt righteousness.
- Actions don't speak louder than words—the Words of the Bible, the Constitution, party platforms, and our personal opinions carry the power of life and death.
- The most effective Christian backs off from allowing their tongues to be used by a political party or human philosophical thought, and instead allows it to be used by the Spirit of God.
- Jesus IS the Truth. He's not separate from His Word, His IS the Word!

Sermon #2: Truth is Absolute & Transcendent

- The truth recorded in the Bible is above our opinions, feelings, party platforms, our experiences (past or present), nature, nurture, choice, circumstances both regular and extenuating, government and its laws, current or past societal trends/morals, other religions & their books, etc.
- All “data” comes from the spirit world and you and I are like people getting on YouTube to look something up: we didn't create nor broadcast the content, someone else did and we're accessing it.
- There are different religions because Lucifer and his angels rebelled and formed their own kingdom.
- They create and broadcast their own doctrine—religious or otherwise—from their kingdom therefore causing many conflicting and various streams of information.
- They've created a spiritual barrier between the heavens and the earth, the ultimate big tech censorship to try and stop us from seeing the truth, Who is Jesus.
- God opened a door through the barrier in OT times to Israel, not only making covenant with them but giving them the Scriptures to record.
- Jesus made the same door open to anyone, Jew or Gentile, to have the same access to Him and His Word!
- Satan & His angels cannot stop or censor this—we now have relationship with the Lord and He's given us His Word, the Sword of the Spirit.
- A Christian casts off the doctrines of the world and understands there is only one source of truth Who is the Lord.
- A Christian doesn't attempt to mix the doctrine of Scripture with other things like other religions, new age, political party doctrine, etc. A little leaven spoils the whole loaf.
- Christians are not to be molded by the philosophies of modern society.
- Neither Jesus nor His Word have changed!

- God is the Potter and we are His clay. He breaks our former worldly mold and reshapes us into that of His Son Jesus.

TODAY. Peacetime is over and now is the time of war.

ADJUSTMENT. For some of us that's going to take a major mental adjustment. A shift in our thinking that will cause to no longer play it safe but to grab our swords and get in to the battle.

NOSTOLGIA. Growing up as a kid here in Addison in the 1970's seemed like an age of innocence. There were still lots of bad and chaotic things taking place in the country and the world to be sure, but as a child like was fairly carefree and I was unaware and unburdened by all that. There were no cell phones and the only hand held devices people had were calculators. Video games were still in infancy and only a few had them. TV had 3 channels and all the good programming for kids ended at 9 AM. We spent most of our time outdoors riding our bikes, playing baseball and soccer, hiking through the woods, swimming, climbing trees, and using our imaginations. Behind my house on Maple Street were 2 large white spruce trees that were easy to climb and my buddies & I built a treehouse and used to spend hours there. More people were attending and involved in their local churches as well.

WE'RE NOT GOING BACK. I say this with no cynicism or resentment—but we're never going back to those days. It's not just a matter of the genie being out of the bottle and the cat being out of the bag. We're hurtling toward the end times and let's be honest: ***we don't just need major change in this world, we need divine intervention.***

DIFFERENT JESUS. The Lord Jesus is coming back and I want you to see the major difference of His first appearance vs. His Second one. When John is first caught up to Heaven in chapter 4 of Revelation, He's shown Jesus as a slain Lamb. Yet by the time we progress to chapter 19, look what happens to the appearance of our Lord:

Revelation 19:11-16 (ESV)

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

LAMB JESUS. You and I are used to seeing certain image of Jesus, ones that reflect His 1st coming “peacetime” persona.

- Jesus sitting and teaching.
- Jesus laying hands to heal others
- Jesus praying in Gethsemane
- Jesus carrying a baby lamb
- Jesus being beaten and crucified, bloody and broken, as He hangs on the Cross.
- Jesus stepping out of the tomb, raised and alive again.

BACK IN THE DAY. All these images are good and true...of His first appearance. Of the way He was when He walked this earth 2000 years ago...back in the day.

TIME TRAVEL? Have you ever longed to travel back to those times and walk with Jesus? To see Him raise the dead, cure disease, rebuke Pharisees, and hear Him preach? Wouldn't it have been great to see risen Jesus?

But those days are gone. The plan of the Lord moves forward—it doesn't go back nor does it stay the same. Jesus is ready to move into the next phase of His dad's plan:

TO BECOME a WARTIME SAVIOR. A WAR LORD.

- His Crown of Thorns is replaced with a Kingly crown of a conqueror.
- He's no longer shedding His own blood, but that of His enemies.
- His body is no longer broken and beaten, but shines like fine brass just taken out of the fire.
- His eyes are no longer the brown puppy dog eyes we see in the paintings, but are now glowing and burning.
- He's carrying a sword and using it.
- He's no longer lowly and riding on a donkey, but a massive white stallion.
- He's no longer just a lamb, but is now the Lion of Judah.
- His intention is to fight—to make war.

COMPROMISE. The enemy is a liar. He still tries to make deals with us, the Church, and in our desire for the old days of being peacetime Christians, sometimes we shake his hand and believe his promises. We nod at him across the negotiating table and trust he'll keep his end of the deal.

“Politics isn't your area” he's told us for years. “Let the politicians fight it out. Go ahead and vote, but don't get more involved because it's not appropriate. Stay within the 4 walls of the church and we'll stay out—that's your playpen and we won't interfere if you won't. Don't worry—we'll keep abortions at the first trimester, let LGBTQ have their parades and wave their flags but it won't become law, and we'll give back all these emergency powers once the crises is over. Things will go back to normal as long as you turn a blind eye and stay in your lane. Peacetime will return.”

CROSSES LINES. Did you know that the Democrats on the House of Reps just passed a bill that legalizes abortions all the way up to the moment of birth? Maybe it passes the Senate, maybe it doesn't, but the devil always moves forward with his plans and doesn't allow us to stay in a state of peacetime. Over the decades the church has watched in horror as abortion is expanded further and further, still naively believing in some false line in the sand the devil won't cross. We've already been introduced to the concept of even after-birth infanticide—at that point it's no longer an abortion. Do you really believe Satan will stop?

GENDER FLUID. After same sex marriage was legalized in 2015, the church watched in horror as things went mad within that movement. There are now so many labels they can't be kept track of, not even by themselves. They convinced people to even to change science—Bill Nye did a whole video attempting to call gender fluidity science! Nowadays many people in the younger generation fully embrace this chaos, even people who attend church and call themselves Christians. Do we believe the Devil will stop there? That he'll finally be satisfied and won't attempt to bring things even further?

Whatever lines in the sand we think have been drawn he'll cross them.

We've transitioned from peacetime to wartime. Jesus hasn't left us helpless!

Ephesians 6:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Verse 10: He's made us strong! Please note we are strong IN Him, in the strength of HIS might! How?

Verse 11: the whole armor of God allows us remain standing instead of getting knocked down. Knocked down by what? The "schemes" of the devil.

SCHEMES. The word "schemes" translates to someone lying in wait in ambush. The context here is army and not individual. As an army is marching from one place to another, the enemy forces find a place where they can mount a successful ambush—maybe something with good cover and the high ground. They hope the marching army will go right into this area where they'll have the advantage so they can rush out to attack.

Paul is telling us that even if we're ambushed we won't get knocked down when the enemy charges out from cover, but we'll remain standing.

The whole point of staying upright is to fight.

Verse 12: the enemy behind the things I mentioned previously is Satan & his angels.

Ephesians 6:13-20 (ESV)

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,

²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

TRUTH—sermon 2 weeks ago was all about it. Can't have on the belt of Truth if we don't acknowledge what it is and walk in it.

RIGHTEOUSNESS only comes from the great exchange Jesus did at the Cross—we gave Him our sin and He gave us our righteousness. There is no other way.

PEACE only comes when a person realizes Father has forgiven all and made us His sons & daughters.

FAITH is a shield and without it, it's impossible to please God. Especially when the enemy is firing arrows of accusation.

SALVATION is only through Christ and is our helmet.

WORD OF GOD and finally we get to the offensive weapon, the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God spoken out loud.

Verses 19-20 shows us Paul is a fighter and doesn't keep his mouth shut when it comes to verbally proclaiming the Gospel and swinging the sword.