

Call of Duty Pt 2 “The Heart of the Soldier”

Central Question:

What does it mean to have the heart of a soldier in the army of God?

I. Introduction: The Call of Duty

A. Every believer is called

1. If God has saved you, He has also called you.
2. Christianity is not a “sit and do nothing” life; it is a call to duty.

B. Series overview

1. Last week: the soldier’s sight (spiritual vision, Elisha and his servant).
2. This week: the soldier’s heart.

C. Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:3–5

1. We walk in the flesh but do not war according to the flesh.
2. Our weapons are not carnal but mighty through God to pull down strongholds.
3. We cast down imaginations and every high thing against the knowledge of God.
4. We bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

II. Understanding the War We Are In

A. Paul’s writings and spiritual warfare

1. Paul often describes the Christian life as a war against an enemy.
2. Our conflict is spiritual, not merely political or cultural.

B. The real battle in our nation and world

1. The struggle is ultimately between good and evil.
2. Quote: “The only way evil can overcome good is when good men do nothing.”

C. The danger of passive Christianity

1. Many believers act as if the Christian life is about comfort and criticism.
2. God calls us to engage, not spectate.

III. God’s Soldiers Do Not Belong to Themselves

A. Identity as soldiers of Christ

1. If you are born again, you are a soldier in God’s army.
2. This applies to men and women, boys and girls alike.

B. Military analogy

1. When you enlist in the military, you no longer belong to yourself.
2. Illustration: the soldier who got sunburned and was punished for “damaging government property.”

C. Spiritual application

1. When we give our hearts to Christ, we now belong to God.
2. Our lives and decisions are to be under His command.

IV. Israel’s Condition in Judges 6

A. Israel in the Promised Land

1. They lived in cities they did not build.
2. They harvested fields and enjoyed blessings they did not plant.

B. The problem of forgetting God in comfort

1. When things get easy, people often stop seeking God.
2. Some only praise God when they desperately need Him.

C. Idolatry and discipline

1. Israel turned their backs on God and built altars to Baal.
2. God allowed Midian to oppress Israel to bring them back to Himself.

D. Midianite oppression

1. The Midianites came like locusts, consuming Israel’s harvest.
2. Israel fled their homes and lived in caves and dens.
3. God’s people were stripped of courage and provision.

V. Gideon: A Fearful Man Called a Mighty Warrior

A. Gideon’s fearful condition

1. Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress, hiding from the Midianites.
2. Threshing wheat should be done in an open, windy place, not hidden away.

B. God’s surprising greeting

1. The Angel of the Lord (the Lord Himself) appears to Gideon.
2. God calls him, “Mighty man of valor” and “mighty warrior” while he is hiding.
3. From Gideon’s perspective, this sounds like sarcasm.

C. Encounter and confirmation

1. Gideon realizes this is no ordinary visitor.
2. He prepares a meal; the Lord consumes it miraculously.
3. Gideon understands this is truly the Lord speaking to him.

VI. God Chooses and Qualifies His Soldiers

A. God uses unlikely people

1. Gideon calls himself the least in his family, and his family the least in Israel.
2. God sees something in Gideon that Gideon does not see in himself.

B. We do not qualify or disqualify whom God calls

1. The church often says, “He’s not qualified; she’s not qualified.”
2. God alone is the One who calls and qualifies.
3. Example: God once used a donkey to speak His word.

C. Call to obedience

1. If you want to be in God’s army, you must be willing to obey Him.
2. God looks at the heart, not human credentials.

VII. Gideon’s First Assignment: Tearing Down Idols

A. The command

1. God tells Gideon to tear down his father’s altar to Baal and the wooden image.
2. He is to build an altar to the Lord in its place.

B. The cost and fear

1. Gideon knows his people will be angry; he risks backlash and even death.
2. Application: obedience may upset people close to you.

C. Gideon’s obedience

1. Gideon obeys at night, tearing down the altar and idol.
2. The next morning, the people want to kill him.
3. His father defends him: if Baal is a god, let Baal defend himself.
4. Gideon is renamed Jerubbaal, meaning “Let Baal contend” or “Baal can handle his own business.”

VIII. God Reduces the Army: Testing the Heart of the Soldier

A. Assembling the troops

1. Gideon gathers 32,000 men to fight Midian.
2. The Midianites are as numerous as locusts; humanly speaking, Israel needs every man.

B. First reduction: fear exposed

1. God says Gideon has too many men.
2. Those who are afraid are sent home; about 20,000 leave, leaving 12,000.

3. Application: in battle, you need people who will fight, not those looking for an exit.

C. Second reduction: alertness tested

1. God again says, “You still have too many.”
2. At the water, God separates the men based on how they drink.
 - a. Those who put their faces in the water are sent home.
 - b. Those who scoop water with their hands and lap like a dog are chosen.
3. Only 300 remain, chosen for their alertness.

D. Lesson on the heart of the soldier

1. True soldiers stay aware of their surroundings even while refreshing themselves.
2. God wants alert, watchful people in His army.
3. Many believers are “just showing up,” but God calls us to be engaged and ready.

IX. From Barely Making It to “Well Done”

A. Against a minimal mindset

1. Some say, “I just hope I barely make it to heaven by the skin of my teeth.”
2. The preacher rejects a “just barely in” mentality.

B. Desire for God’s commendation

1. Aim to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
2. Seek assurance that your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

C. Growing a heart toward God

1. Put God at the forefront of every area of your life.
2. When He is not first, you end up hiding in caves and winepresses.

X. Praise, Pressure, and the Soldier’s Heart

A. Praise in warfare

1. Some avoid praise because they fear increased spiritual attack.
2. The preacher insists that trials should move us to praise more, not less.

B. Fair-weather faith versus faithful devotion

1. Sports analogy: some are only fans when their team is winning.
2. Likewise, some believers are only “on fire” when things are going well.

C. True soldiers praise in every season

1. In sickness, battle, or family trouble, keep praising.
2. Praise reveals the true condition of the heart.

XI. Gideon's Victory and Human Weakness

A. Encouragement from the enemy's camp

1. God tells Gideon to go down to the Midianite camp if he is afraid.
2. Gideon hears a dream about a loaf of barley bread destroying the camp, interpreted as the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.

B. The unconventional battle plan

1. Each of the 300 receives a trumpet, a jar, and a torch.
2. At Gideon's signal, they break the jars, reveal the lights, blow the trumpets, and shout.
3. The Midianites turn on each other in confusion and flee.
4. God gives victory through a small, obedient, wholehearted army.

C. Post-victory missteps

1. The people want to make Gideon king; he refuses.
2. He asks only for gold to make an ephod (a priestly garment).
3. Later, the ephod becomes an object of misguided worship.
4. Reminder: even after great victories, humans are prone to foolishness and idolatry.

XII. Application: From Hiding to Enlisting in God's Army

A. No undercover agents

1. Some claim to be "undercover agents for the Lord" while living like the world.
2. Compromised behavior damages your testimony; people will not take your witness seriously.

B. The call to a clean heart

1. David's prayer: "Create in me a clean heart, O God."
2. Salvation is God changing the heart, not just outward behavior.

C. Questions for personal examination

1. Do you have a true heart for God, or are you hiding in the hills and winepresses?
2. Are you willing to obey even when it costs you relationships, comfort, or reputation?
3. Are you content to be passive, or ready to be an active soldier?

XIII. Invitation and Response

A. Who is being called today

1. Those who have never given their heart to Christ.
2. Those who need to rededicate their lives.
3. Those who are saved but hiding, fearful, or half-committed.

B. The step of enlistment

1. Move from your seat to the altar as a sign of “signing up” in God’s army.
2. Offer your heart, not just your habits, to God.

C. The promise

1. God can create in you the heart of a true soldier.
2. Blessings and victories flow from a life fully surrendered to Him.

Key Takeaway:

To have the heart of a soldier in God’s army is to belong wholly to Him, stay spiritually alert, obey even at great personal cost, and move from hiding to wholehearted participation in God’s battles and God’s work.

Scripture References for Further Study:

2 Corinthians 10:3–5

Judges 6–8

Psalm 51:10

Psalm 139:7–10

Ephesians 6:10–18