

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
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Series: Ephesians  
May 26, 2024

Winning the War

Ephesians 6:10-20

**“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”**

Harris Creek, how we doin'? Let's go, man. Let's go. It's so fun to be with you. I love our church. I just got to tell you that. I'm walking out there in the commons, and it's just a really sweet time to see you guys and hear what God's doing in your life and catch up with your stories. I know some of you are here for the first time and we just want to say, “Welcome home!” We're here every week. So I hope you have this feeling of, “Wait, I can do this every week?” Yes, you can. You absolutely can!

I want to start this Memorial Day Weekend in this service by sharing with you a conversation I had with my grandfather. I was 25 years old and realizing that my time with him was limited and he had fought in World War II. So I was just like, “Gramps, can we talk about that?” He was like, “Sure.” He's a really kind, God-fearing man. And we sat down and he began to tell us. “What

was it like because you're like in the '40s. How did they? How do you get somewhere? What did that look like? What was travel like?" He had just married my grandmother, walked down the aisle, and then he's sent to war where he was stationed on a ship. He was with the U. S. Navy, stationed in the middle of the ocean near Hawaii and he was telling me about it - "There were these Japanese planes called kamikazes and they would use their aircraft and their person as a weapon and they would fly into the ships." He was stationed with his best friend, deployed with his closest friend. They were on the ship together. He said, "Our job; we were gunmen. So there was this kind of giant cannon on the top of this boat and we had to watch for these planes." He said, "One day I woke up to the sound of one of those planes hitting the ship and it threw my best friend overboard where he swam until another ship could come and pick him up where he lived for three months after that. So it wasn't the plan, but all of a sudden he finds himself on another vessel and that's where he lives." He's just telling me all of this, walking me through the details and I can't get my head around it. I'm like, "Gramps, how old were you?" He says, "I was 19." Well, I was 25 and I was playing Sonic the Hedgehog on Sega Genesis and he's fighting wars. I'm like, "What in the world?" So I want to show you a picture of my Gramps with some of his friends. There he is [*pictures displayed on screen*]. Here's the ship that he was stationed on - the USS Helms. Here's a picture of a ship at the time that had been hit by one of those Japanese planes and you see the kind of imprint on the side of that boat. Then here is the USS Helm after one of those planes had been shot down. You just see the shrapnel and whatnot in the air after that explosion. It's just sobering looking at those pictures because for my grandfather, every day he wakes up and he's like, "I'm in the middle of a war." And everything reminds him of a war. The fact that he's writing his brand new wife from afar, from a foreign land, by letter, relying on the U. S. Postal Service so that they can have some semblance of a relationship. That he wakes up to the sound of gunfire and hears planes buzzing overhead and there's a sense that, "Hey, at any moment, we could be hit with a torpedo or something could go massively wrong here." You just walk around and you just have that sense that you are absolutely at war.

As we walk into this room, and as we carry our Bibles, as we sing songs on key and familiar truths; that we just get to sing out and we have fun and we're thinking about where we're going to get Tex-Mex next. It doesn't feel like we're at war, but we are at war. If you don't realize that you're at war, then you're not going to win the war. So you have to understand that you're at war. You have to see the war and we haven't been trained to see the war. Once you see it, you can't unsee it. But, most of us don't see it. So I'm going to attempt today to show you from the scripture, 'the war'.

We're going to be in Ephesians chapter six. If you've been traveling with us, we've been going verse by verse, section by section, through Ephesians. We're wrapping up today here in chapter six, verses 10 through 20. Paul's going to start this section of the scripture, "Finally," he's like,

“Alright, here's my closing thoughts.” I want to give you a kind of ‘wrap a bow’ around all of this. Now by way of review, let me remind you, chapters 1, 2, and 3 - all theology, all doctrine. This is who God is. This is who you are in Christ. These are the truths. The only imperative command that we have in those three chapters is one time he says “remember”. He’s essentially saying “Know this truth. Understand this reality.” Then you turn the corner into chapters 4 and 5 and the word that's repeated there is *walk* - walk now in the truth that you've received. As you understand who Christ is, understand what God desires for you. This is how you live. Chapters 3 and 4 are so much application. This is what it looks like. In fact, it gets really practical and he begins to talk about - last week [*sermon: The Call to Discipleship*], John [Elmore] did an amazing job showing us the Christian household. Children, this is what your relationship with your parents needs to look like (*Ephesians 6:1-3 referenced*). Zeros in, even to fathers; don't exasperate your children, but discipline and disciple them and this is what that looks like (*Ephesians 6:4 referenced*). Then it turned into slave masters and John equipped us with, “Hey, here's how you handle this” (*Ephesians 6:5-9 referenced*). The Bible is not pro-slavery. In fact, it's anti-slavery and he's writing into this culture. The best way for us to imply it today is to think about it in terms of employee and employer. He says, “This is what these relationships look like. You must remember that you're ultimately serving God.” So today, as we wrap up this letter, Paul is writing a letter from a prison in Rome to the church in Ephesus - the strongest, most powerful movement of God in the first century. As we wrap up this letter, I want to remind you that we're to stand strong against Satan, that we're to stand firm and suited up, and that we're to stay praying in the spirit. Lots of S's today, lots of S's. Great Baptist sermon today.

I've been working on this topic for a year now, researching with my friend on staff, Jon Green, studying spiritual warfare. We just finished a project, a writing project on this, so it was a really fresh reminder for me to dive back into this text. I'll start here in chapter six, verse 10, and it says this, “**Finally,**” okay, ready? Wrapping up my thoughts. This is the closing, the punctuation to all that I've said, who God is, who you are in God, what it looks like to walk in that truth. “**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power,**” (*Ephesians 6:10*). Be strong in whose power? The Lord's power. “**Put on the full armor of God.**” (*Ephesians 6:11a*). Whose armor? God's armor. We put on God's armor. “**So that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.**” (*Ephesians 6:11b*). So with God's strength and God's armor, we take our stand against the opposition of Satan; the devil's schemes. “**For our struggle is not of flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities.**” (*Ephesians 6:12a*). The Greek here is the word that they would use to describe the Greek gods - like Zeus. As though Paul is saying, “You worship those gods? You need to know you're worshipping demons. There are demons behind those gods. Any God other than the one true God has a demon behind it.” “**Against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**” (*Ephesians 6:12b*). It's like he's saying, “The enemy is a chess player. Don't get mad at the pieces.” They're controlled

by a greater. **“Therefore,”** verse 13, **“Therefore put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground and after you've done everything, to stand.”** (Ephesians 6:13). As though to say the day of your greatest temptation is out there. The enemy seeks to **“steal, kill, and destroy”** - John 10:10. He wants you to despair. He wants to discourage you, move you toward depression. Your greatest day of evil is out there. Be ready to stand strong in the midst of that with the power of God and the armor of God, you must prepare yourself. That after he's taken things away, he took my job and the relationship and took my health and took this, and you feel completely beat up - he says, “Stand. Get back up and stand and you remain standing against the devil's schemes.” This is my first point. Stand strong against Satan's schemes.

1. *Stand Strong Against Satan's Schemes.*

There's a plot against you. I'm trying to show you the war so we can win the war. There's a war room, whiteboard, file cabinets. It's got your name on it. The demons know you. They know your grandfather, your great-great-grandparents, your great-great-great-grandparents, your great-great-great-great-grandparents, your great-great-great-great-great-grandparents, and on, and on, and on. They see the sin that has been woven through your family that you've inherited, maybe unbeknownst to you. They study you. They know your inclinations, your passions, the things you like, your greatest avenues of temptation. I'm using natural language to describe a supernatural reality as the Bible often does. This is a little bit veiled. We don't know exactly what it looks like, but we do know that there is a spiritual war and that we have people coming after us. I say people; demons. The demonic realm coming after us. Somehow this often gets dropped out of our theology, our story. We have a massive case study on this in the book of Job. We see what Satan can do. People ask all the time, “Well, what can he do?” He can inflict pain, he can take away your health, he can control the weather. He's got a lot of authority here. The Bible calls him the little-G god of this world; the prince of the air. He's a created being; an angel created to worship God. He says, “Hey, I don't want to worship you. I want to be worshiped.” God says “I will send you to the earth and we'll see how you do.” We gain context from the scriptures out of Revelation 12. He takes one-third of the angelic realm with him. We call them demons; demons are just fallen angels, angels are powerful. When you see angels in the scripture, it's usually followed by “*get up*” or “*fear not*” - they're powerful beings. Now there's fallen angels here on the earth that are operating under the reign of one called Lucifer.

We know from James 1:17, **“that every good and perfect gift we have comes from God.”** (James 1:17 paraphrased). Every evil gift you receive comes from the enemy. One thing that he loves to do is to get you to attribute his work to God. “God took this from me, God did this to

me, I'm so mad at God." It's what he does; same old trick since the beginning of time. You have got to know who's responsible for what.

My daughter and I love to play chess, so we have a chess board on our coffee table. Early on in this journey there were quick games, but the student has become the teacher in a lot of ways. Sometimes I'm not, I'm watching TV, not paying close attention, and all of a sudden she takes my queen - or the rook takes my queen, or the Bishop takes my queen. I'm like, "Ugh, rook, ugh. Ugh, Bishop, ugh." It's silly; an inanimate object. It's not that little plastic piece that I'm angry at, but the one who controls it - the mastermind moving that piece to take out these pieces, this 15-year-old mastermind. What I'm trying to say is it's not your neighbor, it's not your mother-in-law, okay? It's not your co-worker or your boss. There's an enemy who's after you who tries to discourage you and often uses people. You have got to know the battle is not of flesh and blood. You want to know what is it that he's trying to keep you from doing so that you can walk in victory. Because if you're not doing what it is he's trying to keep you from doing, he's walking in victory. And I'm telling you, here in America today, there's a lot of victory dances in the evil world; in the evil realm. The battle is not of flesh and blood.

On Instagram this week - a weird story; I'm just gonna give you a heads up on that, about to go to a weird place - is a guy, a reel, and he is of an Eastern religion and he was instructing people on some health care stuff and he had a mason jar filled of his six-month-old urine, okay? Gross, I know. As you watch the reel, he opens it up and he's, "Hey, it's really good for the microbiome. Great for gut health," and he takes a swig. [*Audience gags*] Yes, I said the same. Then he proceeded to say, "Hey, and it's not just, but really what I love to do is it's great for your skin." He begins to splash it on his face and all in his head, right? The caption was perfect. It said, "it turns out when you worship demons behind false religions, they make you drink urine." Here's the deal; it's true. That's what you need to know. That is true. Now let's keep going. There's another one, another reel; social media gave me lots of illustrations this week. There's another middle-aged woman who is doing this thing called rage-retreat. She fancies herself as a witch. You can sign up for her retreats, about \$7,000, and she takes you in the forest and you find some sticks and you begin to beat the ground with them and scream out chants and curses and all kinds of things. Somehow someone caught this on video and the internet had a lot of fun with it. Meanwhile, it's marketing for her as it's a seven-figure business that she's created on these rage-retreats. This witch is taking people on these rage-retreats. I'm just telling you, there are demons watching this like sitcoms and soap operas, providing the audience laughter.

[*JP mockingly laughs*] "Come here. Look at them. Not only is he, but he's getting other people to do it. He's going to, look at her, look at her, watch! So bless her financially, but let's just bring people in." That's what's happening. And you can't see it, but let's keep going because it doesn't

stop there. “Oh, I'll get them to cut themselves.” They'll literally watch. “Come here guys, come here guys, watch! Look, they're depressed. Okay, he's got the knife. Look, look!” Let's keep going. Because you're like, “That's not my thing.” Drive you to depression, despair. They'll be like, “Oh, she's got a hundred dollars. What's she going to do with it? She might give it to an orphanage in Africa or a church or the ministry. No - put an influencer in front of her, get her to buy a bath mat. We can't have those resources being allocated to such things.” You see how they work? Let me keep going. “Take them to places where there's bottled up poison by the masses. They're going to pay money for it and they're going to drink it until they're out of their mind ever so slightly, or maybe massively, maybe to the point of vomiting, maybe to the point of waking up with a headache.” Do you see how he works there? “Come here, guys. Look at them, they're laughing. They're having fun. They're willingly handing over their money to have this done to them. We're winning, we're winning!” That's what they do. “Hey, show them a picture of a naked person trafficked for profit so that they may use them for their own personal pleasure.” And we delight, it's worship. We love it. It doesn't even need to be porn, it can just be the device. “Send him home into the house, completely checked out, so he would mindlessly scroll while his kids have questions about real life things. Just keep them scrolling.” Do you see how they work? You gotta understand the spiritual war to find victory in the spiritual war because you're in it whether you see it or not. If you don't see it, you're losing. If you don't understand it's there, you're losing.

These are the same demons who are trying to lead your kids astray, trying to end your marriage, trying to keep you discouraged in singleness, ultimately trying to get you to hate God. That's what they're trying to do; to get you to hate God. That's why you must, verse 14, **“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all of this, take up the shield of faith, which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”** (Ephesians 6:14-16) Let me just say this right here. A couple of things going on. I think we've over indexed on the helmet and the breastplate protects the heart and the helmet protects the head and the belt holds it all together. I don't think that is the original author's intent. More than likely Paul, chained to a Roman guard, a Roman soldier rather, and he's looking for an illustration as he pens this letter to the church in Ephesus. He's saying, “Hey, these are the things that you fight a spiritual war with, and he's relating it to actual weapons that protect someone from their enemy's weapons; from their enemy's attacks.” When he says “the shield of faith,” Roman soldiers didn't have a shield like Captain America. It wasn't like a trash can lid. It was like a full body wooden shield and so what their enemies would do is shoot flaming arrows at them. If that arrow hits that shield, then the shield's on fire, burning like kindling. The soldier loses it and now they're exposed for attack. So what they would do is they would soak leather in water all night and they would stretch it over that shield so when the arrow comes, it would extinguish the arrow. So his readers, listeners,

would have completely understood these illustrations. So he's using illustrations they knew to say, "Hey, there's a spiritual attack and you need spiritual weapons because you cannot fight a supernatural war with natural weapons. You need supernatural weapons." So he's telling you what your supernatural weapons, what your supernatural armor is. Verse 17, "**take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.**" (Ephesians 6:17) Now, in a series here, Unseen Battles, if you didn't hear that, you can go back and listen to it. It's all on the Harris Creek app. It's free to you. It's all on the Harris Creek website. What we did is we took each of these articles of armor, and we expounded on each of them. I'm not going to do that today. You can go back and listen to it then. And truly, I don't think that's the heart of going verse by verse here. I don't think that's his original intent, as I said. I think what he's saying is don't focus so much on the object of or on the position of the armor - the helmet, the belt - but think about the object of the armor; which is the truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the word of God. This is what he's saying. And so my second point is stand firm and suited up.

## 2. *Stand Firm and Suited Up*

We're to stand firm and suited up with the armor of God; God's armor protecting us. What is the opposite of standing when at war? I know, it's sitting, but that's not what I mean. When at war, the opposite of standing strong is retreating. Interestingly that when a Roman soldier has no armor protecting their back, so that they would be forced to remain facing their enemy and marching forward. They either die in battle, but if at any point they retreat, it meant their death because there was nothing protecting them back here. So he's saying, "Hey, do not retreat. Stand strong. The enemy is going to come after you; don't be surprised by it and when it happens, stand strong in it." This is what he's saying, as if point one didn't scare you, point two he's saying you have everything you need for victory. Everything you need for victory is available to you. Our problems are not that we don't have the weapons, it's that we don't pick them up. It's because we don't see the war. If the enemy convinced us we're not at war, then we're not even picking up the weapons. First Corinthians 10:20 - *I think it's actually 13* - Yes, 10:13 says, "**No temptation has seized you except what is common to people and God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear and when you are tempted, He will provide a way out so that you can stand up under it,**" (1 Corinthians 10:13) meaning that you always have a way out. There's no temptation in front of you that you have to succumb to, that you have to fall victim to, that you have to give into. You have everything you need right now to be strengthened no matter what the temptation is. If Satan attacks you, if you do these things, God will protect you. Think about it. You're in a room, there's lots of doors coming into this room and Satan is on the other side of all of those doors. Well when you know the truth, you shut the door. That's one door shut. When you walk in the Word of God, you shut another door. When you live a righteous

life, which means do the right thing - you just say, "I'm going to do whatever the right thing is, no matter what it costs me, no matter who knows, no matter who ridicules me. I'm just going to do the right thing." You shut a door. When you go and you share the gospel of peace, you shut a door. All of a sudden you're safeguarding your life from the enemy's attacks. So, we know the truth, we walk in righteousness, we share the gospel, we live by faith. So often we pray for things so that we don't need faith. No - we live by faith. We remember that we're saved, renewing our minds, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and that God raised him from the dead and we know the Word of God. You cannot fight a supernatural war with natural weapons.

Jesus. We're Christ-ians, little Christ, we're Jesus-followers. Jesus, the one we follow, modeled this perfectly for us. Because here's what you need to know, Satan's not omnipresent. The truth is Satan's probably never been anywhere near you. You may have some demon assigned to you, assigned to your street, assigned to your neighborhood, assigned to your family line. It's hard to know exactly what it looks like, but you have some evil demon that knows you and studies you and is tracking with you. You're thinking, "All right, how do I fight? How do I experience victory over that demon?" He's telling you. Because when Jesus was on the earth, Jesus came face to face with the head guy, the top dog. So Jesus hasn't eaten for 40 days, He's in the wilderness, He's hungry. This is what it says - I'm going to be a Matthew chapter four. I'll just read it to you. **"The tempter came to him and said, 'if you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'" (Matthew 4:3)** He hasn't eaten, He's hungry. **"Jesus answered, 'It is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)** He's quoting to Satan, Deuteronomy 8:3. **"Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written: he will command his angels concerning you and they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' Jesus answered him, 'It is also written, do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Matthew 4:5-7)** He's quoting from Deuteronomy 6:16. **"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'worship the Lord, your God, and serve only him.'" (Matthew 4:8-10).** Quoting to Satan, Deuteronomy 6:13. **"Then the devil left him and angels came and attended him."** (Matthew 4:11) Jesus, when He was on the earth and He was tempted face to face by Satan, He responded three times with everyone's favorite memory verses from Deuteronomy.

You've got to have the Word of God on your heart because today you're going to be tempted toward anger. You can think, "No, I want to be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to become angry, for a person's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."



(James 1:19 referenced). Or maybe you're tempted toward lust. You can think 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, "I'm going to flee sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit whom you received from God? You are not your own; you've been bought by a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:18-20 referenced). Or maybe you're tempted to give away your heart, to let it chase after things. No, Proverbs 4:23, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it's the wellspring of life, everything you do flows from it." (Proverbs 4:23 referenced) Or maybe you're tempted for charm and beauty. You're trying to figure out, "Hey, who should I marry? Who do I want to spend my life with? Who should I date?" Proverbs 31:30, "Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." (Proverbs 31:30 referenced). We've got to write these words on our hearts as we come face to temptation. You're like, but I can't memorize the Bible. But somehow you memorize like entire scores of nineties rap music. You got every Taylor Swift lyric, hidden in your heart. Replace T. Swift with Leviticus, okay? That's what I'm saying, right? You'd be better off. That's what I'm saying, remember the Word of God. This is how you win - your quiet time is not some "reset", some sweet reset, sweet time with Jesus. No, it is a strategy; a supernatural strategy against satanic attacks. That's what we're doing in the morning. We're filling our heart with the Word of God so that we can win the battle that we're in, that we may not have known we were in.

My daughter and I are doing jujitsu, Brazilian jujitsu, same daughter. She's more committed than I am. She's wearing me out, "Dad, we got to go, we got to go, and go." And I didn't go the other morning and she went and then afterward she was like, "Do you want to roll?" Roll is like sparring in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. I was like, "Sure." So I go up and she and I are rolling. So I'm 6'7". I'm two and a half times her size; 15 years old. She chokes me out, twice. She actually choked me out once and caught me in an armbar twice. I'm just telling you, I was with all my strength, not holding back, 100%. She catches me twice, which is demoralizing, humiliating, for practicing humility right now, working on humility. How? Why? What happened? I know I'm opening myself up for all kinds of, you know. But what happened? She trained and she applied what she trained. It's that simple. She trained and she put forth the application from which she was learning and she got it. She used my strength against me, she learned how to leverage, she figured out the point, she knew where to go and she got this old man. She took advantage of me, took me to the cleaners. My point is to win the war, you've got to train for the war. You can't just be like, "That's good. Oh, wow. Write that, tweet that out." No - you got to do it, man. You've got to do it. You go back in Ephesians six and you start figuring out, "Do I renew my mind around the gospel? Do I understand my salvation? Do I know the truth? Am I writing the word of God on my heart? Am I doing the things?" Cause if not, the enemy is going to eat your lunch. The greatest way he eats your lunch is he tricks you into not realizing that he's eating your lunch so

that you get years down the road only to wake up to be like, “Oh wow, I just wasted the better decade of my life giving glory to the evil one.” It happens to people in church all the time.

Verse 18. **“And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me,”** Paul writes, **“that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”** (Ephesians 18-20). He says, “Pray.” Pray for yourself at all times. Stay connected to your commanding officer. Pray also to your brothers and sisters in the faith. Pray for Harris Creek. Pray for people you're worshipping beside. Pray for other people in the body, those that are being led astray, and those that are doing well. Pray for them often. And pray for your pastors - shameless plug. Pray for your boy. Pray for everyone up here. The target on the back gets big. So pray, stay connected. But we're not just praying that we would be do-gooders, pray that we would fearlessly share the gospel. Pray for courage. Pray that we would be strengthened. Because there's this thing that's happening in the church right now.

If you think, “Where's the church missing it?” Is it missing it in love and compassion or is it missing it in strength and courage; to be fearless? A lot of you might say the church is really missing it in the loving/compassion category. Here's why. Because those are the stories that make the headlines. That's a sleight of hand trick. “Look at this. See this crazy Christian? See these churches?” The church is actually, by and large, crushing it on the love and compassion. Their names are on the tops of hospitals. Sick people are coming to them and being healed. They are doing the most good in the land today; the church of Jesus Christ. An army of salvation is working in our land. Where we're missing it is we're lacking in the boldness and the courage. You say, “How do you know?” I'll just look at your life and think, “How many times did you share the gospel yesterday? Why not? Did you not see anybody who was lost? Are you saying, ‘Well, that's not my mission. I'm not supposed to do that. I don't think God's called me to that. I'm an Enneagram whatever, right?’” No! If you're saved, you're absolutely called to that. I believe that God literally wants you to do that, that you would consider, “What do you need to do?” Am I saying you need a megaphone on the street corner? No, I'm saying you need to share the gospel with every coworker and with every person that lives on your street, most of the people in your neighborhood, anyone in the carpool line. The people in your life, they need to know the gospel of Jesus Christ, how they can live forever because you're in their life - and that's normal. That's what he's saying, “Hey, pray for us, that we would do that.” And so they prayed for him and he did it. But what about us, right? So we got to pray. We're not like people that just give out water and food so that we can save someone for 76 years so they go to hell then. We're not the UN, we're not the Peace Corps. We're Christians; we take that glass of water and we attach it to the gospel, we take that meal and we attach it to the gospel so they can eat and be

nourished here and live forever. [Audience member claps] This is what we do - Yes! Is everybody on the same page? Just making sure we're all on that - like, "We get it". You're like, "Yes, like that guy that's clapping. That's the cry of my heart. I want to do that." I want us to do that. I know, man, you've experienced church. But listen I grew up in church. The passion you hear is because my first response to the gospel was anger. How did I miss it? How come nobody told me? "Oh, we're actually supposed to do what this book says - like all the time? That kind of simplifies things, honestly. Oh, this is what it looks like." There has to be all this undoing, the crusty religion has to fall off your heart so that you learn, "Oh man, he's actually calling me to live on mission," that you wouldn't just be inspired by a sermon, that you would go and your life would be changed. You'd never be the same. Stay praying in the spirit and share. That's my third point.

### 3. *Stay Praying in the Spirit and Share!*

Stay praying in the Spirit and share. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? It's not a mystery. It's that you are praying to the Creator of the heavens and the earth to be aligned with the work of God, the power of God, for the purpose of God. That you would understand that he's with you; you have his Holy Spirit and his Holy Spirit is powerful. He displayed his power when he brought the dead back to life. That God, you have access to at all times. He's calling you to something way more than you think he is. He wants you to live a life fully surrendered to him. That prayer is a weapon, a really significant weapon. So listen, if you struggle to pray, that's because the war is spiritual. The enemy does not want you to pray.

I have been on a mission trip. I've been to Rwanda, Kenya, Zambia, Haiti six times, and the Amazon jungle three times. When you go on these trips and you circle up afterwards, everybody has a story - I say everybody - a lot of times there's a story of, "There was this demon-possessed person in the village, this 12 year old girl picked up these two men overhead and threw them." All the time I would hear those stories. "They were speaking to this loud voice. She was young and yet this like deep, gurgling voices." I've always heard these stories, I've never experienced it ever on any of those trips, I've never seen it. I've heard them from people I trust, but there's always like a shadow of doubt. "Really? Two guys over her head, really?" I'm in a country club in Colorado, one of the nicest country clubs in America. A guy just comes off the course, he's got his polo shirt tucked into his khaki shorts, got his golf cleats on his title, his visor on. I engage with him, "Hey man, how you doing? Hey, do you have a faith?" He tells me, "Yeah, I do, but I really struggled to pray." I was like, "Tell me more about that." He says, "Man, whenever I pray, it's like my throat closes up. It's just weird. Something comes over me." I'm like, "Man, that's wow - that sounds demonic." "Ha ha ha, That was not demonic, you sound like my mom. What are you talking about? Crazy Christians. No, it's not demonic." I was like, "Oh, okay, alright.

Hey man, do you care if I pray for you?" "Nah, sure. Pray for me." I just put my hand on his back and my friend walks up. We're in this country club in Colorado and I just begin to pray. I say, "Dear Lord, I pray for John and I pray that you would protect him from evil and that whatever's happening, if there's anything demonic happening here, Lord, that you would bind in Jesus name." [JP makes grunting noises]. It just starts making this terrible noise, in the country club. Body starts convulsing, doubles over, and I'm like, "Oh my goodness!" I would love to tell you that I was like, "**To live is Christ, to die is gain**," (Philippians 1:21 reference) but I was like, "Oh no, what is happening right now? Lord, keep it off me, keep it off me." It's a weird story. Why am I telling you? Here's why I'm telling you this really weird story because it's true; because I lived it. It was a game-changer for me because now it was with my own eyes. I'm telling you I was there. I have to have some credibility with you - dude was not acting; this was not an act. His arm throws up in the sky and he gets bigger and louder, and we're like, "Oh goodness, God, please help." Then he gets quieter and he calms down. I say, "In Jesus name, Amen." He says, "What was that?" My buddy, who's with me, who's a strong believer says, "Oh, that was demons." I say, "I think it was demons and I'm not surprised they didn't want you to pray."

You're probably scared. You're like, "Man, what if he sends demons? I don't want demons. What if he sends demons to me?" He doesn't need to; he sent you TikTok. He sent you Instagram. You understand? He doesn't need to do that to keep you from praying. He can just get you radically focused on your kids that your control takes over and you just worry about them all the time and you worry more than you pray. He gives you the big business deal; the one you've been waiting on, and, "It's look at me." Then it's, "Let's go celebrate and let's keep celebrating, right?" This is what he does. He doesn't need to send you a demon to you. Maybe he will, maybe he does. My hunch here is that's not what's necessary. You got to understand the war. You got to understand you're in a war. You can put on the full armor of God, but if you're not talking to the commander in chief, you're playing dress up. You're painting your face green for Halloween, throwing camo on with an airsoft AR-15; you're playing games. If you're not steady talking to the commander in chief, you're playing dress up.

So in summary, 1) we're to stand strong against Satan's schemes, 2) we're to stand firm and suited up, and 3) we're to stay praying in the Spirit and share.

If you haven't heard a couple of years ago, there was a U. S. soldier by the name of Bowe Bergdahl and Bowe was at war in Afghanistan and he just was over the war. He said, "Hey, I don't." He was watching kids go to and from school and people going about their lives. Meanwhile, he's stationed and he thinks, "I don't think this war is real. I don't think it's really happening. I don't think it's necessary that I be here away from my family." So he takes off his

fatigues and he sets down his rifle and he walks into enemy territory. He was almost immediately taken a prisoner by the Taliban and he's held as a prisoner of war and he's held hostage; or held as a prisoner. What happened was he lost sight of the war. I think that's happening here. I don't think we're focused on the war. It's very important that you understand that you have everything you need for victory. It's not hard. Your enemy is not equal. This is not dualism. We do not believe in the heresy of dualism. Satan and God are not equal opponents. Satan is God's Satan, which is a really big theological statement we'll have to unpack another time, but just meaning God is sovereign even over his enemy. He's infinitely more powerful than his enemy. The God that you have access to, the God who is with you. You have everything you need for victory, but you got to see the war because if you walk into enemy territory, unarmed, you're going to be taken as prisoner and the greatest prisoners of the enemy today don't even know that they're prisoners. They're laughing and partying all the way off the cliff. They don't even know that they're captive.

The reason you may know Bowe is because it was big national headlines because we traded five Taliban military leaders for that one US soldier. There's a lot of people who are outraged by that. "We gave five of their leaders for one traitor," some said. They said, "That's not fair. We shouldn't do that." Let's ask Bowe if we should do that. How does Bowe feel about that? Don't you see that's what God did for you? You're a prisoner and He gave His one and only Son in an exchange for your life so that you can be his child forever, so that you can be in the Kingdom with Him forever and ever and ever and ever. God says, "What's it going to take? My only child?" It wasn't just that he gave him and swapped him. No, he was brutally murdered, slowly tortured, asphyxiated on the side of a road, pinned to two pieces of wood, nails in his hands and feet. Why? For you; as a reminder that the battle is won. Victory is the Lord's. Hell was created for Satan; he's gonna be thrown into the lake of fire. I've read the back of the book. I know how it ends. You got to know that right now. There's been a prisoner swap and you are the beneficiary of it. You benefited from it.

Let me pray. Lord, let me thank you that you saw us as fit to be swapped for - freed. Wow! That you gave your son in death so that we could walk in life. Lord, I pray that we would live the life that you've intended us to live. The enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus came so that we might have life abundantly, to the fullest. Would you give us that full life? Help us to live for you. And I pray that we would stand. When he takes our health, that we would stand. When he takes our mind, that we would stand. When he takes our possessions, that we would stand. Our money, that we would stand. If he takes our children, I pray that we will still stand in worshipping you, declaring your goodness, God, you're a good God. We declare it now in song that you're fighting our battles. In Jesus name, Amen.