

PROGRAM 47 TEASER

Most Christians will never serve in the military. Others like me will serve our time. But when we trust in Christ as our Savior, we all learn in a hurry that we have entered a war against an invisible and cunning enemy. And Satan does not take kindly to losing his former prisoners of darkness. But we also learn we have the resurrected Jesus Christ in us and at our side. He intends to use this spiritual warfare to develop His soldiers—you and me—into proven overcomers made to shine forever. And the weapons He gives us make the world's bombs look like firecrackers. Today on More Than Talk—Come To Christ—Go To War!

COME TO CHRIST—GO TO WAR!

Page 1 You are on the side that won

“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” Romans 16:20

He was first seen in the Garden of Eden as a wily tempter, though he had existed long before the Creation as one of the head angelic powers. It was the same pride he uses today to trap others that caused Lucifer himself to be hurled from heaven to earth. His doom was sealed, but his Creator, God the Almighty, would use him as a means to develop sons and daughters of God into proven overcomers who, though tempted to choose evil, would instead choose God. This work of God's grace accomplished through Jesus' blood would take Satan's seeming success against our first parents and explode it in his face.

Two actions by God were all it took - events that shook the universe. The Cross was His remedy for sin and the Resurrection sealed the devil's doom. No longer are you and I to cringe before Satan. Though still called our adversary and able to appear as an angel of light, Satan is a defeated foe. Every follower of the Lamb has been given authority over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19) and ordered to resist Satan by the authority of Messiah's blood and Name (James 4:7).

You are privileged to have a foretaste of the total victory that is to be yours. Already you have been raised with Christ to heavenly places in spiritual authority (Ephesians 2:6) with all the powers of hell beneath the feet of Christ the head and His Church the body (Ephesians 1:21-23). The final scene is yet to come: just as ancient conquerors placed their feet on the necks of defeated foes, so will the true God of peace, who claims you as His own, crush the false god of war, Satan, under your feet shortly in final triumph. Since his defeat is final, don't give in to any of the devil's final-gasp devices. You are already on "the side that won"!

My prayer: "Teach me to know my enemy's devices and wiles but to fear only You, my precious Father. Cause me not to faint in spiritual warfare but to be an overcomer by using the power and authority of Jesus' own blood and Name."

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Page 2 War is not a game

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds” 2 Corinthians 10:4

In combat, soldiers learn to fix their attention on one thing - the battle being fought. Otherwise a dull and wandering mind can quickly lead to a dead soldier. The war holds all priorities until it is won. Christians under persecution understand this concept in spiritual warfare. Sadly, others of us who live in political freedom and material affluence make Christianity more of a game that we play - and retire from - at a whim. But dear friend, you are in a war with a wide-awake adversary. God intends to use your life to defeat the devil - while Satan in turn employs strategies to try to defeat you.

Just look at the arsenal you have been given in order to conduct spiritual warfare. Your weapons are not "physical (weapons of flesh and blood), but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds." (v 4 Amplified) Talk about "super-weapons." We have them! The Name of Jesus that, when used in prayer and intercession, can demolish the strongest of Satan's fortresses - and break in pieces his hold over the minds of men. The blood of the Messiah that can cleanse the vilest and turn raging sinners into redeemed saints. The power, signs and wonders wrought by the mighty Spirit of God that can send demons shrieking in terror and cast down and destroy imaginations "arguments, theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the true knowledge of God..." (v 5 Amplified) that have forged the chains of those who are lost - including your unsaved loved ones. So accept the fact that you are at war until the Lord comes for you or calls you to Himself. Fight the good fight by using your weapons in prayer, in resisting Satan and in binding the forces of darkness. The souls of men and women are at stake!

My prayer: “Open my eyes, oh Father, to what You have made me - a fully armed soldier for Christ and not merely a weak human being.”

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Page 3 The armor of spiritual warfare

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11

This verse is part of one of the greatest scriptural lessons on spiritual warfare in the New Testament. It is true that our God is an awesome God. It is also true that we have a wide-awake enemy probing for ways to weaken our devotion to God and to destroy us. That means we had better be wide-awake saints who recognize the enemy, learn how to use our weaponry and fight to win.

I am in the habit of putting on the armor of God each morning in my devotions. One day, a simple but precious truth dawned on me. In Romans 13:14 we are told to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" while in Ephesians 6:10-17 we are admonished to "put on the whole armor of God." I looked closely, and found that my Jesus and my armor are really one and the same. Let's look and see.

In Ephesians 6:10, we are told to be strong in the Lord - to draw our strength from Him. In today's verse 11, we are given the armor of God so that we "may be able successfully to stand up against all the strategies and the deceits of the devil." (Amplified) We are told in verse 12 that we are not "contending only with physical opponents but against...the spiritual forces of wickedness in the supernatural sphere" (Amplified) That's where the armor of God comes in (vv 14-17) and this reminds me of Jesus. Your loins belted with truth - He is the Truth; your breastplate of righteousness - He is made our righteousness; your feet shod with the gospel of peace - He is your peace; your shield of faith - you live by the faith of the Son of God; your helmet of salvation - Yeshua means salvation; and your sword of the Spirit, the Word of God - Jesus Himself is the Living Word.

So get in the habit of putting on afresh each day the full armor of God. For when you do, you are putting on the mighty Lord Jesus Himself. Then you can face any adversary and come out on top. When J. C. Penney was asked the secret of his amazing success, he answered with only four words: "Adversity and Jesus Christ." That says it all!

My prayer: "Thank You, Lord, for all the weapons and armor of the Spirit. Teach me how to fight the battles You choose for me to enter, and to be standing at the end."

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Page 4 When devils flee

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” James 4: 7

Christians in the fatty West where stomachs are easily filled, wallets padded and leisure made abundantly accessible, usually don't get it. Only a remnant understands the truth that is more readily grasped in lands where Christ's followers must suffer and die. What truth? We are at war - a war that will be fought to the death, both your death and mine. The devil is the enemy and his army of demons is formidable. He is out for control of the world, including us. He despises you and me and plans to seduce us away from Jesus one way or another. To ignore him as if he doesn't exist only invites more of a beating. To focus on him beyond what God intends gives him too much credit. To taunt and revile Satan, as some evangelicals do, is to move out of the bounds of God's orders.

The devil is to be resisted by you and me just like Jesus taught us: "It is written." We have the blood of the Lamb and the Word of God as weapons from which all of hell shrinks in terror and even flees. Why then does Satan so win battle after battle with Christians who mutter: "I resisted the devil but it didn't work. He still made me do it!"? There are two parts to today's scripture, not one. Before resisting must come submitting. "Submit yourselves" to God is to surrender and be subject to only Him. No loyalty above Him. No will but His. Then "resist the devil" takes on new urgency and brings on Christ's power. No wonder the devil doesn't walk away but flees from the one who draws near to God. (v 8)

The time is short. (1 Corinthians 7:29) God knows it. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4) The devil knows it as his time is running out. (Revelation 12:12) Does the Church know it? Do you and I? (Romans 9:28 "...a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.") Three sayings that crossed my desk warn me concerning the need to submit to the Father of truth and to resist the father of lies: "God doesn't want shares of your life; He wants controlling interest." "Give God what's right, not what's left." "Give Satan an inch and he'll be a ruler."

My prayer: "Open my eyes, dear Father, to the invisible war that is raging all around me. I surrender my will to You and will resist the devil as You open my eyes to his attacks and wiles."

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Page 5 The answer to Satan's wiles

“For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” 1 John 2:16

The devil's seducing of the human species - Christians included - may become more subtle and sophisticated, depending on the need. However, his three-fold plan of attack never changes - tried and proven over some six thousand years of man's existence. His attack worked in the Garden of Eden, failed when employed against Jesus, and is used to this day against you and me.

Here's how the Amplified exposes Satan's three-fold bait: "...the lust of the flesh (craving for sensual gratification), and the lust of the eyes (greedy longings of the mind) and the pride of life (assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things)." In America, where everything comes so easy, the devil's bait bucket is loaded with whatever he thinks you and I will accept and so pull us away from allegiance to Jesus.

How can you and I keep from being one of Satan's catches? Memorize today's verse including the one before it and the one after. Then put them to work. 1) Don't love the world with its glitter and glamour. Fix your gaze on Jesus and keep it there. (v15) 2) Learn to recognize - and reject - everything that you sense could not meet His approval. (v16) 3) Develop a keen sense of eternal values - everything seen will dissolve; only God's Kingdom and those who do His will shall remain forever. Then all that God gives you - time, energy, money, things - will merely be a trust you are to use to bless the lives of others, including your brethren in the poorest places of the world, and not to be squandered on self. You will be building for eternity, unlike the foolish man who lay dying and lamented, "I have made good preparations for everything in my life. But now I am about to embark on the longest journey I have ever taken, and I am totally unprepared."

My prayer: "Lord Jesus, all of Satan's wiles were tried - and all failed - against You. Now You live within me. Cause me to love You so passionately that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life shall have no power over me."