

THE CHURCH MILITANT

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Ephesians 6:10-20

1. How we view the Christian life is important because our view impacts the way we live.
2. For many Christianity simply involves some sort of affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ and some level of involvement in religious activities.
3. In 2 Timothy 2:1-7 the Apostle Paul compared the Christian life to that:
 - a. Of a soldier. "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." 3
 - b. Of an athlete. "Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules." 5
 - c. Of a farmer. "The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops." 6
4. There was a day when the true church was militantly aggressive in seeking to advance the kingdom of God.
5. The followers of Jesus Christ understood that spiritual warfare was the norm and not the exception.
6. What was true then should be true today.
7. Let me share some quotes from John MacArthur. (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary on Ephesians)
 - a. "The faithful Christian life is a battle; it is warfare on a grand scale because when God begins to bless, Satan begins to attack."
 - b. "If we are walking worthy of our calling, in humility rather than pride, in unity rather than divisiveness, in the new self rather than the old, in love rather than lust, in light rather than darkness, in wisdom rather than foolishness, in the fullness of the Spirit rather than the drunkenness of wine, and in mutual submission rather than self-serving independence, then we can be absolutely certain we will have opposition and conflict."
 - c. "As believers grow stronger, so will Satan's attacks."
 - d. "A Christian who has no conflict is a Christian who has retreated from the front line of service."
8. F.B. Myer was a greatly used man of God who lived from 1847-1929.
9. Warren Wiersbe referred to him as a "militant mystic."
- 10 In his book, *Reveries and Realities*, Myer wrote to the pastors of his day:

"It is urgently needful that the Christian people of our charge should come to understand that they are not a company of invalids, to be wheeled about, or fed by hand, cosseted (cuddled, pampered), nursed, and comforted, the minister being head-physician and nurse-but a garrison in an enemy's country, every soul of which should have some post of duty, at which he should be prepared to make any sacrifice rather than quit it."
11. The passage we are focusing on this morning will give us some insight into how we can be good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A good soldier of Christ Jesus:

I. Will be spiritually fit. 10

- A. Physical fitness is important for those who serve in the military, and it is especially important for those who must actually face the enemy and press the battle.
- B. As Christians we face powerful enemies, and we must be spiritually fit if we are going to have the perseverance to endure.
- C. Paul wrote, “Be strong (be empowered) in the Lord, and in the strength (vigor) of His might (ability).”
- D. The Lord Jesus does not expect us to fight in our strength, but rather in His.
- E. I like the way that the Amplified Bible translate this verse.
“In conclusion, be strong in the Lord-be empowered through your union with Him; draw your strength from Him-that strength which His (boundless) might provides.”

II. Will be properly indoctrinated. 11-12

- A. A good soldier has some knowledge of his enemy, his enemy’s objectives, and his enemy’s tactics.
- B. Our enemy, the devil, is shrewd.
- C. Paul wrote of the schemes (strategies and deceits) of the devil.
- D. Many today discount the idea of a personal devil who controls the activities of a host of demonic spirits. (I am sure that he is pleased with this turn of events.)
- E. Paul made it clear that our struggle is not only against other mortals.
- F. Our opponents are a part of the domain of darkness (Colossians 1:13) and under the influence and direction of the god of this world. (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- G. There is a hierarchy of evil that is arrayed against God, His Christ, and His church.

III. Will be strongly motivated.

- A. Morale is important in a military unit.
- B. It is hard to get men to risk their lives for something they do not believe in.
- C. For the most part those who serve in the armed forces of the United States believe that our nation and way of life are worth fighting for.
- D. If we are going to “be strong, stand firm, and resist in the evil day” we need to believe totally in and be fully committed to that which Christ is seeking to accomplish in this world.

IV. Will be fully equipped. 13-17

- A. In verse 11 Paul wrote, “Put on the full armor of God,” and then in verse 13 he added, “Therefore, take up the full armor of God.”
- B. We have a related passage in Romans that sheds some light on what Paul meant by the full armor of God. Rom 13:11-14
11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and **put on the armor of light**. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

- C. If you and I are going to be good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ we must:
1. Be girded with the truth of Christ.
 2. Possess and manifest the righteousness of Christ.
 3. Be personally anchored, grounded in the gospel of Christ.
 4. Take up the shield of faith in Christ.
 5. Take the knowledge of the gospel of Christ.
 6. Know how to wield the sword of the Spirit which is the word of Christ.
- D. The tenses Paul used speak of ongoing, continuous action.

V. Will be prayerfully protective. 18

- A. We are to see ourselves as a unit and understand that we have a responsibility to watch out for one another.
- B. We are to be on the alert (on guard) with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.
- C. As we give ourselves to prayer the Holy Spirit will give us the power and insight we need to pray effectively.

VI. Will be boldly opportunistic. 19

- A. Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him.
- B. He wanted his message to be divine in its origin. (That utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth.)
- C. He wanted his message to be delivered with boldness. (To make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.)

APPLICATION

1. Sometime go through your hymnbook and look at the dates and the themes of the hymns we sing.
2. The great Reformation hymns and the hymns written during the seventeen and eighteen hundreds conveyed the reality of spiritual warfare.
3. One of my favorites, “Am I a Soldier of the Cross,” was written by Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

“Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb?
 And shall I fear to own His cause, or blush to speak His name?
 Must I be carried to the skies, on flowery beds of ease,
 While others fought to win the prize, and sailed thro’ bloody seas?
 Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood?
 Is this vile world a friend of grace, to help me on to God?
 Sure I must fight if I would reign; increase my courage Lord!
 I’ll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by Thy word.”
4. May God help us to be good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ that the world might again say, “These men who have upset the world (the inhabited earth) have come here also.” (Acts 17:6)