

2 Samuel 11

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[0 : 0 0] turn to the second book of Samuel, 2 Samuel chapter 11. If you'd like to turn there we're going to read that passage which we're going to think about a little later on as well.

If you've got the church Bible then that is page 314. I thought somebody might have beaten me to it then and shouted out but you're all well restrained. 314 in the church Bible. We're going to read from verse 1 right through to the end of the chapter and then come back to this a little later on to consider one aspect of it. Not all of it but just one aspect of it. Here is God's faithful truthful word. In the spring at the time when kings go off to war David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabah but David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace.

From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said isn't this Bathsheba the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

And David sent messengers to get her. She came to him and he slept with her. She had purified herself from her uncleanness. Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David saying I am pregnant. So David sent this word to Joab send me Uriah the Hittite and Joab sent him to David.

When Uriah came to him David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were, how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah go down to your house and wash your feet. So Uriah left the palace and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. When David was told Uriah did not go home he asked him haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home? Uriah said to David the ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields.

[2 : 2 7] How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? Surely as you live I will not do such a thing. Then David said to him stay here one more day and tomorrow I'll send you back. So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation he ate and drank with him and David made him drunk. In the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants. He did not go home. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote put Uriah in the front line with a fighting his fiercest. Then withdraw from him so that he will be struck down and die. So while Joab had the city under siege he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab some of the men in David's army fell. Moreover Uriah the Hittite died. Joab sent David a full account of the battle. He instructed the messenger when you have finished giving the king his account of the battle the king's anger may flare up and he may ask you why did you get so close to the city to fight?

Didn't you know that they would shoot arrows from the wall? Who killed Abimelech son of Jerobeth? Didn't a woman throw up a millstone on him from the wall so that he died in Thebes?

Why did you get so close to the wall? If he asks you this then say to him also your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead. The messenger set out and when he arrived he told David everything Job had sent him to say. The messenger said to David the men overpowered us and came out against us in the open but we drove them back to the entrance to the city wall. Then the archer shot arrows at your servants from the wall and some of the king's men died. Moreover your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.

David told the messenger say this to Joab don't let this upset you. The sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it. Say this to encourage Joab. When Uriah's wife heard her husband was dead she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over David had her brought to his house and she became his wife and bore him a son. The thing David had done displeased the Lord. Well let's come again to prayer. 2 Samuel and chapter 11 if you'd like to have that with you.

Now 2014 as I'm sure you're well aware it marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the first world war. Already several television programs have been aired on the subject and many more I'm sure besides drama reenactments, live audience debates on the rights and wrongs and the workforce and any number of documentaries about certain places, battles, armies and so on. It was called the Great War.

[5 : 24] Optimistically the war to end all wars. Of course the remainder of the 20th century was even more bloody than those four or so years in Belgium and France. Not only the second world war, barely 20 years after the end of the first civil wars, conflicts, uprisings and even of course still today our news is almost entirely concerned with either ongoing hostilities or the threat of war and aggression. Peace it seems is a very rare commodity. It is evasive and beyond the grasp of human beings.

I want us to turn to Samuel 11 to what is a very well known incident in the life of King David. Really it's his darkest hour.

It's really cast a terrible shadow over the whole of his life and he saw terrible repercussions because of those few days when he fell into very gross sin and wickedness.

I don't want us particularly to concentrate upon David and upon this episode in his life. Important and many lessons we could draw from it but really I want to think about the repercussions of these events in the life of Uriah or in particularly the death of Uriah.

Uriah the Hittite we can see was the faithful and upright husband of Bathsheba. David is told that there in verse 3. Daughter of Iliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

[7 : 10] We see as well that he was a soldier, a serving soldier in David's army who was under the command of Joab, David's great general.

There in verse 6, David sent this word to Joab. Battle was going on, battle with the Ammonites, verse 1 tells us, where the city of Rabbah was besieged.

In other words, the army of Joab, amongst them being Uriah, was surrounding this city, seeking to take it and conquer it. While Uriah was out there fighting for his country, for his king, while he was doing his duty, David, who was his king, took his wife, committed adultery with her.

Within a matter of weeks, no doubt, she sends him back news that that relationship, had ended in her being pregnant, expecting a child.

It was obvious it couldn't be Uriah's. He was away at war, fighting. What was David to do? So David, like all of us, tries to cover over his sin.

[8 : 28] Tries to somehow hide it away, sweep it under the carpet, do something to cover his tracks, get himself out of the noose that he's made for himself.

And so, first of all, he subtly sends a message, verse 6, to Joab, commanding that Uriah be sent home, with the hope, of course, that naturally Uriah would want to go and see his wife and spend time with her and re-establish a relationship with her.

That would solve the problem because, of course, then any baby that was born would be thought of as Uriah's. It took place while he was home from the war. But Uriah was a righteous man, an upright man.

He wouldn't go home and sleep with his wife. He wouldn't go home and enjoy the comforts of his own household. Rather, he would sleep, verse 9, we're told, at the entrance to the palace with all the master's servants.

On a mat, we're told, as well. Not a comfy bed. David challenges him about this. He says, what are you doing? Why aren't you enjoying these things? He said, how can I?

[9 : 41] My duty is I'm a soldier. I'm serving. I'm in active service. I can't go and indulge in these pleasures. He was single-minded. So David tries again, doesn't he?

Stay a bit longer. And then he gets him drunk, hoping that in his inebriation he will forget his duty, forget the right thing to do, and he will go home.

Even inebriated, even worse the wear, two sheets to the wind, he still won't go home. He still sleeps on the mat at the doorway of the palace.

David has run out of ideas of what to do. He's desperate. He's got to get himself out of this mess. It can't be seen that the king is an adulterer. It would ruin everything.

The shame of his sin. And so he resorts to the only thing he's got left, and that's murder. Murder by proxy.

[10 : 42] He commands Joab to get Uriah killed in battle. That would clear the way, of course, as it ultimately does for him to marry Bathsheba. And though the child would be born, and many would think, well, that's very soon, very premature, the baby, yet it could excuse away what had happened.

And very few would think that David had committed adultery, and hopefully he'd get away with murder as well. So Joab, we're told, doesn't question David.

He was not a godly man, Joab. He was a wicked man. And so he goes ahead with what David tells him to do, and the end result is that Uriah, this righteous man, this faithful husband, this man of great duty and honor, is killed.

What's that got to do with us? What's that got to do with me talking about wars and conflicts, as I did at the beginning? Well, you see, in this battle which Uriah dies, I believe there's something to teach us about the spiritual conflicts that we as Christians are engaged in, and especially about our commander, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can't draw this truth from this passage, but we see throughout the scriptures the truth and the reality that every single Christian, every single person who has sided with the Lord God, every single person who has come over from the side of the devil to the side of Christ, is now in the Lord's army, involved in conflict, involved in fighting, involved in a struggle.

[12 : 20] We see that especially so in the most natural place to see that, of course, is in Ephesians 6, where the apostle Paul is writing to the Christians there, and he says to them, verse 10, 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, or literally our wrestling, or our hand-to-hand combat, 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. But Paul is not referring simply to himself, to the apostles. He's writing to Christians, ordinary, everyday Christians, not the elders or the deacons or the minister, but you and me.

Our struggle, your struggle, your battle, our battle, is a spiritual battle. And in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in this battle in which we are engaged, it's a spiritual battle that every Christian is enlisted into as soon as they come to Christ, there are no conscientious objectors.

That doesn't mean that Jesus is so severe that he will not give room for conscience, but rather you see, whether you like it or not, your enemy will attack you.

[13 : 47] You don't have to go and find the enemy, because he will come and find you. As soon as you are Christ, you are immediately moved up from the bottom of his hit list to the top of his hit list.

You are now his enemy, and he is now your enemy. Before we were Christians, the Bible says we were in the domain, in the kingdom of the devil, the kingdom of darkness. We were under his rule, as it were, whether we knew it or not.

And nobody really knows it when they're there. They're blinded and darkened, and we were like that. But Christ came and rescued us and took us out of the dominion and the command, as it were, of the devil, and placed us under his own command.

And, of course, immediately then you're on the opposite side. Satan is out to get you. One of the great lies, of course, that the devil tells the world is the devil wants your best interest.

He wants you to have fun. He wants you to enjoy life, which is why he sails people down the river, as he does, with all sorts of fakes, with all sorts of promises of fun and enjoyment and pleasure, but with a very nasty bite in the tail.

[14 : 56] No conscientious objectors, because, dear friends, once you are Christ, you are immediately under attack. Peter, as he writes his letter to Christians who knew what it was to suffer and to be persecuted, he says this to them, be self-controlled and alert, your enemy, the devil.

Prowls round like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him. In other words, he's coming after you. The devil is after you. And he is looking for those he can devour, those he can attack, those he can assault.

So even if you are a pacifist and don't believe in war, you've got no option. As a Christian, you are engaged in spiritual warfare.

When Jesus was about to leave his disciples, he prayed for them in that wonderful prayer of John 17. And one of the things he prays for concerning his disciples is this. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.

He didn't want his disciples to be hidden away or to retreat from the battleground. The world is the battleground, the world in which you and I live. That is the place of conflict.

[16 : 14] That is where the battle takes place. Jesus will not take us out of the world, but his prayer is that the Father would protect us. We are to remain under his keeping and care.

And of course, when Jesus taught the disciples to pray, often we call the Lord's Prayer. His prayer includes, of course, that prayer, deliver us from evil.

And you'll know, I'm sure, that some of the translations that we have actually personify evil and say deliver us from the evil one. Satan himself is the personification of evil.

So you, dear friend, and I, as Christians, we are in a spiritual battle. We are in a spiritual conflict. And we need to be aware of that. We need to be awakened to that.

We need to be on our guard to that fact. We mustn't think that we are somehow living in a neutral zone. We're not Swiss. Okay? We're not neutral in this battle.

[17 : 17] We are engaged in this battle. We are those who will be under assault and attack. And we should be ready and prepared for that. And expectant of that. Whoever you are.

This isn't a neutral world in which we live. The people that we are speaking to and talking to. The people who give us grief at work or school or make things difficult for us. They are not neutral.

Satan is the one in whose domain they live. Under his influence. However, though we are always, in one sense, to be on our guard.

Though we are always in this spiritual battle as believers. There are times when we go through particularly severe battles. Particularly hard battles.

If you read something, or as you know that, you'll hear something of the history of World War I. You'll hear about things like the Somme. Passchendaele. Hear about various places.

[18 : 17] Gallipoli. Particular battles. Particular areas. Where there was the most awful. The most terrible fighting that took place. And for us, there are those battles which are not common.

They happen occasionally. They are rare, thankfully. But they are times of the fiercest fighting. They are times when the enemy particularly is active and set against us to harm us.

Or to throw us off course. Or in some way to deter us from living for Christ. Now we know this is so because we have, of course, the greatest example of living for God in the Lord Jesus.

And we know what happened to him, don't we? Those 40 days within the wilderness. When Satan personally came and attempted him and attacked him.

Right at the beginning of his ministry. Remember when it happened. It happened just after his baptism. When he had received those words of affirmation and encouragement.

[19 : 16] This is my beloved son. Before he started to preach. Before he started to minister. Before he had prepared himself for that ultimate mission of the cross. The devil was there to attack him and to divert him.

Luke chapter 4 speaks about it. And notice this. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert. Where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil.

And let's not think that Jesus' temptation there was easy. Well, he was the son of God. What? You know, somehow that was easier for him than for us.

No, it wasn't. He says Hebrews was tempted in every way just as we are. Yet did not sin. There was a real wrestling. There was a battle going on there.

In that desert between Christ and Satan. Satan's determination. Satan's determination was to prevent Jesus from doing the work that God the Father had sent him to do. And Jesus' determination was to do it.

[20 : 16] And it's very important as well to notice, as I've already mentioned, that this took place after a time of great blessing for Jesus. It wasn't that, if I can put it this way, and please don't feel I'm being dishonorable to our Lord.

It wasn't that somehow he'd wandered from the track. It wasn't because Jesus wasn't where he was meant to be. He was always where he was meant to be. And here we're told he was led by the Spirit. Sometimes we get to think, well, it's only when things are going wrong or I've sinned, that's when the devil will attack.

But rather, dear friends, the more times he should be aware of his attack is when things are going well. That's when he's more likely to attack. When things are going well, because we can be off our guard.

We can think that everything's okay. I'm walking with the Lord as I should. And everything's right. And we can be off our guard and Satan will come and attack us there. We see at the very end that Luke comments and says to us, verse 13 of Luke 4, When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

That wasn't the end of Jesus' temptation. He didn't just have a one-off block, as it were, for these 40 days. The Satan came again and again and again. It left him for an opportune time.

[21 : 43] That's why Peter says, the devil is like a prowling lion. What's he doing? He's looking for the right moment. The devil is not stupid. Wicked, evil, depraved.

But not stupid. He knows our weaknesses. He knows our frailties. He knows when's the best time to attack us. And for some of us, that may well be. When things are good and things are going well.

Because maybe pride creeps in. Or a sense of complacency creeps in. Or we just are so consumed with ourselves. But there's others.

Not only is our Lord Jesus an example of spiritual attack. But of course, Peter. Jesus is, we might say, a right-hand man. Peter, when in Luke 22, after Jesus had said he was going to go.

And go to the cross and die. Peter says, yes, I'll go with you. What does Jesus say? Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. In other words, Satan's coming.

[22 : 42] He's coming and he's going to attack Peter. We know that he did earlier on, didn't he? When Jesus asked to say to him, get behind me, Satan. You have the thoughts of man, not of God. Because Peter had allowed himself to be conned by the devil.

And here again, pride was coming into his heart. Sense of complacency. A sense of, you know, I can do it in my own strength. Satan's coming to sift you. And we know, of course, that he attacked Peter three times.

And each time, Peter failed and failed. We know of Job, of course, don't we? Read the story of Job. What's Job all about? Well, if you go to the beginning, you'll find that what happened to Job was that Satan was allowed to attack him.

Satan was allowed to harm him. Satan's doing. Yet the Lord God, of course, overruled in all of these things. Even the Apostle Paul, and we could find many other examples too, knew what it was to be attacked and buffeted by Satan.

He speaks about this thorn in the flesh who is a messenger of Satan. So difficult and painful was the conflict that on three occasions he prayed that God would remove it from him. Yet received the promise of God the Father.

[23 : 55] My grace is sufficient for you. So, dear friends, we shouldn't be surprised when we come under spiritual assault from our enemy.

We should rather be ready and prepared for these things. Peter, again, as he writes to the Christians in chapter 4 of his first letter, Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you're suffering as though something strange were happening to you.

That's how we feel, isn't it? When we have those assaults, spiritual assaults upon us. When we struggle and wrestle in prayer. When we feel ourselves unable to get to grips with the word.

When we find ourselves in a place where our hearts are being pulled this way and that. With temptations assaulting us. We feel, what's wrong? What's happening? Well, it's, in one sense, we can say it's normal.

It's in a battle. We shouldn't be surprised. But we should be ready. So, what are we to learn when we look at Uriah?

[24 : 57] What's this got to do with Uriah? Well, let's go back there again to 2 Samuel. We see that we are in a spiritual conflict. Uriah was in a physical conflict. But there's wonderful encouragement for us, dear Christians.

Three things, very simply. First of all, we have a better commander than Uriah's commander. A better commander than Uriah's commander. For our Lord Jesus Christ is the commander of God's army.

Back in Joshua in chapter 5, when Joshua is walking the walls of Jericho. He meets with this angelic being. And he says, are you with us or against us?

He says, I'm neither with you or against us. I'm the commander of the Lord's army. Joshua falls down and worships him because he recognized that he was somebody special.

It was the Lord Jesus there who gave them the victory. Right at the end of our Bibles in Revelation chapter 19, we have this glorious vision of Jesus coming in triumph and majesty.

[25 : 59] And what is he like? This is what Revelation records, what John saw. I saw heaven standing open. There before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.

And then later on it says, verse 14, the armies of heaven were following him. He's the commander. Our Lord Jesus striding out like a general before his troops coming with mighty power to overcome his enemy.

We've got a better commander than Uriah's commander. Uriah's commander was Joab, wasn't he? We see he was a corrupted commander. He was a commander who did not care for his troops.

He was a commander who did not look after them. Joab knew where the most dangerous place was, didn't he? Verse 16. While Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were.

But when the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell. Moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. Joab knew where the danger spot was and he sent his men there.

[27 : 08] Jesus, our better commander, knows where the real danger is for us, where the enemy is too strong for us. And he does not send us there. He's quite the opposite.

He will not put us in a place which is too hard for us. He will not send us into a situation which is dangerous for us. He will always command and direct our affairs that is for our best interest and protection.

1 Corinthians 10 makes that very, very clear. Verses 11 to 13. Paul is writing and speaking about the believers in the Old Testament and about how they fell and got things wrong.

And he says, verse 12, so if you think you're standing firm, be careful you don't fall. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And what we're saying, this is usual. We're in a battle.

Therefore, these temptations and spiritual attacks are to be expected. But he says, God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. Now let's be honest.

[28 : 12] There are occasions when we suffer and endure spiritual conflict in our lives and we do not feel that we can bear it. We feel as if we are going to be overwhelmed.

We feel as if we're going to be crushed. As you get to know me, you'll know that I love Pilgrim's Progress. And Pilgrim, in one part, is having a battle with Apollyon, who is the devil.

And the devil seems to be destroying him and crushing him. And he seems as if that's it, he's done for. And just at the last minute, something happens. You'll have to read it for yourself. I'm not going to tell you what happened.

But just at the last minute, in the 11th hour, when it seems as if Apollyon, the devil, was going to destroy Christian Pilgrim, something happens. And he gains the victory and is able to continue.

Now we feel ourselves when we are in a world which is against us. When we are filled with all sorts of temptations. When there are struggles. When we find ourselves discouraged and disheartened.

[29 : 13] When we find living the Christian life tough work. Let us be aware that this is the spiritual conflict. This is not unusual. It's not because you're a worse Christian than the people sitting next to you.

It's not because somehow they are better Christians than you. That they don't appear to have those conflicts. They do. And if you ask them, they'll tell them that they do. But no matter how tough it is, dear friends.

No matter how hard it is. You have a commander who will not, not, not put you in a place that's too much for you to bear with. As Peter Paul writes here, when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out.

When you're under assault, when you're under pressure, he will provide a place for a way out. We have a wonderful commander. And the wonderful thing is this. As we sang earlier on. Not only is he our commander, but he's who directs us and guides us.

But he's the one who fights for us. He fights for us. As we saw there in Revelation in chapter 19, he's the one who makes war. He's the one who fights.

[30 : 22] How did those people of Israel bring down Jericho? How did they destroy it? How did they overcome it? How did they besiege it? Was it by their own power and strength?

Was it by their own mining abilities? And they got under the walls? Was it going to explode? No, it was the Lord. So it is as we go to battle and fight, we go in the Lord. We go with the Lord as the one who fights for us and the one who gives us strength.

Again, in Ephesians 6, notice how Paul begins, verse 10, with, Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

We mustn't undervalue the devil, if I can put it that way. We mustn't think, and some Christians can get very dangerously close to this, in one sense that we have some power and authority imbued within ourselves, where we can stand against the devil and tell the devil to clear off.

And in some way, it's us. That's not the case. And sometimes, again, we face temptations, and sometimes as Christians we put ourselves in very dangerous situations, and we think, well, you know, I'm not going to, I won't be tempted.

[31 : 39] I won't fall. Even if I go to this place of ill repute, if I can put it that way, or put myself in this situation and get involved in that, I know that I won't fall. I know that I won't sin.

I know I'm strong enough. That's a very foolish thing to do. We can only resist. We can only go forward. We can only fight with the strength that the Lord provides for us.

And we have to go in humility into battle. We have to go with a sense of our weakness into battle. Well, victorious Christian living begins with humble Christian living.

Pride is the devil's best weapon. If he can get us to feel overconfident in ourselves, if he can get us to think that, you know, we're Christians, we've been Christians 40 years, 30 years, 20 years, nothing can faze us, then we're in deep, deep trouble.

So we see that our commander, the Lord Jesus, is a much, much better commander. But we see also as well, the armor that we have is a better armor than Uriah's armor.

[33 : 00] Go back to that report that's given to us by the messenger from Joab concerning the death of Uriah. We see what happened there, don't we?

He says this, verse 24, Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead. Clearly, he was killed by an arrow.

And therefore, for an arrow to kill him, he had to find a chink in his armor. There was a hole, there was a space in his armor, whether it was his helmet or wherever it was, so that he was not fully protected in the battle.

Christ has provided us with such armor that is completely perfect in protecting us from every assault and weapon and scheme of the enemy.

That's why we have it there in Ephesians 6, don't we? Put on the full armor of God. That's why we have several pieces of armor, don't they? For our head, for our chest, we have even for our feet, and we have the shield, and so on.

[34 : 07] Perfect, full armor. And what did we see? Verse 16, In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Satan's fiery arrows. The most deadly, the most powerful, the most awful, the most terrifying. Even they cannot penetrate our shield, the armor that we have been provided with, from God.

But notice this, that the armor that God gives us is armor to cover our front and not our back. In other words, the only place that we are safe in the battle is when we're moving forward.

If we turn to run, if we turn away, that's when we're in danger. Our back is exposed.

But as long as we are moving forward, as long as we are engaging in the Christian life, as long as we are progressing in those things, then we are protected completely. There is no chink in our armor because God has given it to us.

[35 : 19] Therefore, I need to say to you, dear friends, it's vitally important that you put on your armor. It's something that I do personally in my prayer time, in my quiet time, by prayer, put on those pieces of armor.

Lord, clothe me with that breastplate of righteousness, protect my heart that can so easily be distracted. I put on by faith a helmet of salvation that my mind may be protected. Take up the shield.

Put it on in your prayer life. It's not a superstitious thing. It's again reminding ourselves that God is the one who keeps and protects us and that we're looking to him for that. We've better armor.

And finally here, thirdly and finally, in this battle in which Uriah dies, remember Uriah dies in this because he had a bad commander, because he had insufficient armor.

We will not die in the battle. We will come through the battle because we have a better commander, because we have complete and full armor, but also we see here, we have better comrades in the battle.

[36 : 23] Uriah was one of the army, wasn't he? He was one of several soldiers. But notice what the command was that David gave. Verse 15.

Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fierce, then withdraw from him so that he may be struck down and die. In other words, desert him. Tell the soldiers to leave him and not to stand with him and fight with him.

He was left exposed. He was left alone. He was left unsupported when the enemy fire came and so he suffered and died. Now, dear friends, in this spiritual battle in which we are engaged in, we are part of an army and we are placed in platoons.

And this is one of them, local churches. We are placed together that together we may fight, that together we may support one another in prayer, in encouragement, in counsel, in love.

Again, Ephesians 6, verse 18. After Paul has spoken all about the armor and the sword and so on, what does he say? As he continues to talk about spiritual warfare 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 saints.

[37 : 44] In other words, keep praying for one another. He says, pray for me as well. He was aware of his own weakness. Yes, the armor is given to us, but we are not called to fight alone.

We are not called to stand against the enemy by ourselves. We are called to be part of a local church that we can support one another. Now, we know that in an army, an army does not just simply consist of those that are on the front line at one time.

There is a chain of supply, isn't there? There are those who are behind them and supporting them and helping them. We all have a part to play in the army of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul says in 2 Corinthians about the body, we all have a part to play. We are all part of the body of Christ and we are all part of the army of Christ. We all have a vital part to play.

That's why, dear friends, I have to say to you again, it is so vitally important that we are committed members of a local church. It's important. It's not about just getting your card signed.

[38 : 47] It's not about having your say in what the church does. Those things, that's important, but it's about a commitment to one another like signing up for the army, like signing up to your regiment and saying, I'm committed to you, I'm standing with you, I'm shoulder to shoulder with you.

Where you suffer and fight, I will fight with you. When you are having difficulties, I'll be there praying for you. When you need encouragement, I'll seek to encourage you. Dear friends, surely as well, it's for our own benefit.

If we are not fully those who are committed to one another, then how can we receive the support we need and receive the encouragement we receive and be able to be prayed for? We keep ourselves at a distance in one sense.

Because in the local church, what are we doing? We are training together. We are training, we are going through the exercises and the assault course. We are being trained under God's word so we might grow stronger together in the knowledge of his will, that we might be able to fight together and we might see, oh, to see men and women rescued from captivity in Satan's kingdom.

To see his battle lines pushed back in people's lives and communities. as God is at work and as people are transformed, we've got a better commander with better armor and we've got better comrades and we need to be better comrades than Uriah's comrades.

[40 : 15] We need to be there for one another. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder. We need to share in some of the blows that our friends take. So Uriah was lost, wasn't he?

Righteous man. Faithful husband. He was defeated and he was killed. That battle that he fought was his last but dear friends, we have more battles to face.

More struggles to be engaged in and by God's grace and with his help we can do that. Paul says to Timothy in his first letter to him, chapter 6, fight the good fight of faith.

Fight the good fight of faith. And as we sign together, we go forth in your strength alone.

Our own great weakness feeling. Our own great weakness feeling but with the Lord's strength. Well let's sing together as we close.

[41 : 20] We're going to sing a song which is on the projector. It's a modern hymn, a wonderful hymn that speaks about these things that we've been thinking about, that spiritual warfare which we are engaged.

It's not projecting it. If it isn't... If it isn't... Yay!

Yay! Great. Well done. Let's stand and sing. windows■■... filmmakers in the center Honestly toda we need to get Jesus Union Castle them created for many people and the■■le components the people they provide for many people who want to come from the director if they want to lie as args and they enjoy Maeve Sit in the heart and all and Still a flip and a turn true, We'll spend the years the devil's eyes, And a loving old whose lands of pride are Reaching out to those in darkness.

And all to all to love the captive soul, And to rage in its light counter, And with a sword that makes the world at home, We will fight with faith and power, And face with joy on every side, We know the outcome is the sin, And at all.

ston shared grip. The Christ of age benign An inheritance of nations See the cross Where love and thirst is indeed As the Son of God is stricken See His rose Like Christ in His feet For the conqueror has risen And as the stone is rolled away And Christ emerges from the grave His victory marches Continues still the day Every eye and cloud shall see Him So Spirit come

[44 : 19] Who strength in every stride Give grace for every hurdle And we may run With them to win the prize Of a servant, good and faithful As saints of all Till I'm away Pretending triumphs of His grace Be given all And conquer for the day When with Christ we stand in glory Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace At all times And in every way The Lord be with you all Amen When doing all the Blessed

Even the Lord of peace And in people So To out Like One Number■■ And Lord of Fell Mix That Cup He Execned Beautiful ■■■ In Form Tra■■ And align together Soior keeping Öyle land arab Princip curvete Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[47 : 45] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.