

Paul, the Warrior

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Thy off'ring, Father, in thy counsel floweth, Every creature Christ with thine inketh, Thy Lord to serve hath seen thy.

Those divine, non-seeking heavens, Where, fulfilled for thy delight, All the joy in Christ's works of love There exult in glory's light.

By the Spirit's army strengthened, [00:01:02] Every idol give to gain, Every new-rod'ing come to live, With Christmas of joyful praise.

Every sample gather round thee, Give, O Christ, a beautiful tray, And for thy delight and pleasure Shine through all eternal day.

There thy lover, old and slender, [00:02:05] Shall forever find his rest, While each of his joy outpouring Will at long his heaven rest.

I'd like to read this evening in the book of Exodus, chapter 15. I think that's better. Thank you.

[00:03:05] Exodus, chapter 15, and verse 1.

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song to Jehovah, And spoke, saying, I will sing unto Jehovah, For he is highly exalted, The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. My strength and song is Jah, And he is become my salvation. This is my God, and I will glorify him, My Father's God, and I will extol him. Jehovah is a man of war.

Jehovah his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army hath he cast into the sea. His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. [00:04:03] The depth covered them, and they sank to the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, Jehovah, is become glorious in power. Thy right hand, Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And by the greatness of thine excellency, Thou hast overthrown thine adversaries. Thou sendest forth thy burning wrath. It consumed them as stubble.

And by the breath of thy nostrils, The waters were heaped up. The streams stood as a mound. The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. And in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 4.

[00:05:07] Gospel of Luke, chapter 4, verse 1. And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness forty days, tempted of the devil.

And in those days he did not eat anything. And when they were finished, he hungered. And verse 9.

And he led him to Jerusalem and set him on the edge of the temple and said to him, If thou be son of God, cast thyself down hence. For it is written, He shall give charge to his angels concerning thee to keep thee, and on their hands shall they bear thee, lest in any wise thou strike thy foot against a stone. [00:06:04] Jesus answering said to him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And the devil, having completed every temptation, departed from him for a time.

And the last scripture in 2 Timothy, chapter 4. 2 Timothy 4, in verse 14.

Alexander the Smith did many evil things against me. The Lord will render to him according to his works, against whom be thou also on thy guard, for he has greatly withstood our words. At my first defense no man stood with me. At my first defense no man stood with me. [00:07:04] And all deserted me, may it not be imputed to them. But the Lord stood with me and gave me power, that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all those of the nation should hear. And I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. The Lord shall deliver me from every wicked work and shall preserve me for his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory to the ages.

Amen. Salute Prisca and Aquila and the house of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus I left behind, and Meletus, sick, used diligence to come before winter.

When reading the scriptures, [00:08:06] one is always impressed with the wonderful sequence, the wonderful order in which the truth is presented.

For example, if we think of the beginning of the scriptures, the writings of Moses, we first of all come across Genesis, which deals with our beginnings.

We're living in a land, as it were, that is full of glory and greatness, but yet a land that Joseph didn't even want his bones to remain there.

He wanted, as it were, to get out of such a place.

[00:09:04] And this we find, of course, at the beginning of Genesis, that God takes his people out of Egypt, where we have to learn to depend alone on the resources of God, because where we were was not a suitable place for the worship of God.

At the end of Exodus, of course, we learn that God desires to dwell here, desires to dwell with men. And therefore, after our own personal deliverance, we have to come to an appreciation of what God desires and the things he desires here.

When you go to Leviticus, of course, you learn how God wants to be served, and therefore you have the many details [00:10:05] throughout the scriptures in Leviticus as to how calmly we should approach God.

When you go to Numbers, you find that the first requirement is for soldiers.

Every young man, those aged 20, are required for the Lord's army.

It's not a volunteer army.

It's an army of conscripts. Every one of them is numbered, from 20 years old and upward, which no doubt would picture for us a developed Christian living in the good of the spirit [00:11:02] and able to take up combat in the service of God.

In Genesis, Abraham had to learn even to go to war because of one brother.

We don't usually think of engaging in war just for the salvation of one brother, especially a brother like Lot. I'm sure if you had a brother like Lot in your locality, it would be unlikely that you would require such resources for the recovery of such a brother.

When you go to Genesis, you find that you have to be prepared for unprovoked attacks, as you have in the case of Amalek.

[00:12:02] You have to learn how to deal with these things even though you've had no previous military service or training.

You find the same thing even in the book of Leviticus when you get to the second last chapter, that the requirement of the military is that they are in touch with God.

If they do certain things according to the mind of God, they are assured of victory.

In Exodus 15, we read about God being a man of war.

I would like this evening to speak a little about Paul as being a man of war.

Before touching on Paul, [00:13:02] I would like to show from the scriptures the military features that mark God himself. When we go to Exodus chapter 15, we learn how God, Jehovah, is involved in war.

It says that he removed the chariot wheels of Egypt, that he overturned the Egyptians into the midst of the sea, and Israel walked on dry ground, so that they had seen, as it were, in the activities of God, how God would engage in battle on their behalf. This is something, of course, that we have to learn, [00:14:01] that we have to be prepared for conditions of warfare. In Exodus, we find, of course, that the unprovoked attack by Amalek is not something that just happened historically because Jah would have war with him from generation to generation.

So there's no point in being like Hezekiah and thinking about having peace in our time, but that it is a matter that will go on from generation to generation. So therefore, going to the writings of Moses, we find very clearly that God is a man of war.

And if you go to the Psalms, like Psalm 24, you will find the testimony of the Psalms to a similar thing. [00:15:04] In Psalm 24, in verse 7, Lift up your heads, ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

And then again, if we go to Isaiah 42, for the testimony of the prophets, we find there, it says in Isaiah 42, in verse 13, Jehovah will go forth as a mighty man. He will stir up jealousy like a man of war. He will cry, yea, he will shout.

He will show himself mighty against his enemies.

And therefore, we have it from these three principal sections of Scripture [00:16:05] that God is indeed a man of war.

When we go to the pathway of the Lord Jesus, as we read this evening in Luke chapter 4, we find, of course, the same features.

The Lord Jesus goes forth to meet the greatest enemy of all.

He goes to enter into conflict with Satan himself.

It says, In Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, was led by the Spirit in the wilderness forty days, tempted of the devil.

That he, almost the first step in his public pathway here, [00:17:08] was the meeting of this foe.

And you find, of course, that the Lord Jesus was victorious because you find that Satan makes a strategic withdrawal.

I think it's in verse 13, it says, And the devil, having completed every temptation, departed from him for a time.

But we see, as we read on in chapter 4, that the Lord Jesus has come to release the prisoners of war. He comes to release those who were prisoners of the devil. And so we find, he says, He has sent me to preach to captives deliverance. [00:18:02] And what a wonderful, blessed view of the Lord Jesus it is to see how he takes on the power of the devil, how he takes on the power of the devils, how he liberates all those who were held in bondage or imprisonment and at the end of the chapter he enlarges his theater of operations where it says, I must needs announce the glad tidings of the kingdom of God to other cities because he is going to acquire territory and acquire souls and liberate them from such bondage.

We even find in the scriptures that the idea of warfare is connected with the Holy Spirit in Isaiah chapter 59.

[00:19:08] It says in Isaiah 59 verse 19, And they shall fear the name of Jehovah from the west, from the rising of the sun his glory. When the adversary shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah will lift up a banner against him and the Redeemer will come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob. So it's always well when we speak about features to be found in the Christian to see them first of all set out in all their blessedness and in all their completion in the blessed God himself.

[00:20:01] Even when we read in Colossians in chapters 1 and 2 it's rather interesting to see the seven references there to combat and to warfare and other such items.

We read about them in the last few days I suppose. In Colossians 1 we read that he has delivered us from the authority of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the son of his love. That is he has liberated us from one kingdom to transfer us into another.

Then of course as you know it speaks about the enemies and Paul says, [00:21:02] Wherefore also I toil combating according to his working.

Then he says, For I would have you to know what combat I have for you and for those in Laodicea.

Then he speaks about no one shall lead you away as a prey or as a captive to bring you into such conditions. Then at the end of chapter 2 that wonderful scripture where it says that having nailed it to the cross, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them publicly leading them in triumph by it to demonstrate the wonderful victorious character there is.

When we come to consider a man like Paul, [00:22:08] we recognize we have one who was a man of war.

He had, we might say, campaigns.

Campaign in Asia, campaign in Europe.

It's wonderful to see how in one way many of the features that mark probably the greatest warrior in the Old Testament, that is Joshua, that also have features that are reflected in the life of Paul.

In scripture there are two kinds of warfare. You have the type according to Joshua [00:23:02] and you have the type according to David. According to Joshua, it's a war of extermination.

According to David, it's a war of subjugation.

Put, therefore, to death.

There are things that in our Christian lives we have to learn to completely exterminate, that is to put to death.

That was, of course, the commission of a man like Joshua and what was required of him. When you come to the reign of David, it's more a matter of subjugation. Of course, we have to learn in our Christian lives what we have to exterminate and what we have to subjugate. [00:24:01] We have to learn how to deal with different things, sometimes in a slightly different manner. This, of course, brings out skillfulness in us, in our operations.

You'll remember when we go to the Acts of the Apostles and we could look at the Scripture in chapter 19.

I'd just like to read some verses there in verse 17 of chapter 19. This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who inhabited Ephesus.

And fear fell upon all of them. [00:25:02] And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many of those that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds. And many of those who practiced

curious arts brought their books of charms and burned them before all. And they reckoned up the prices of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver.

So that what was overthrown by the ministry of the Apostle Paul was the city of the book.

And you'll remember in Judges chapter 1 and in Joshua chapter 15, it speaks of the city of Kirjathsepha. That is the city of the book.

[00:26:02] The book of charms.

Charm was one of the first things that was brought in in Genesis chapter 4, where you have the introduction of the arts and crafts and the skill of man in music. And then brought in the daughter, whose name meant charming. This city of the book is something, of course, that is very important, especially to those who are younger at the present time. It represents a great system, no doubt of man's education and man's learning. And we do not disparage learning in any way.

It's very necessary for us, especially in a day like this, that we make ourselves proficient and educated and all the rest of it. But then the question is, [00:27:02] what kind of literature do we feed upon?

You remember the young men at the beginning of Daniel, that what they fed upon was reflected in their person.

And what we feed upon is reflected in each one of us.

Now, there's a great array of literature available to us at the present time.

But the question is, what am I feeding on? Sometimes when I pick up a newspaper, I stop myself and think, what am I doing, wasting my time?

An old godly brother once said, if you want to read the newspaper, read it standing up. And I'm sure that would be very good advice.

[00:28:05] There wouldn't be any point in sitting down and reading the sports page or the amusement programs or the goings-on of these popular stars in music and sports and all the rest of it at the present moment. The question arises, how can we pass through a scene such as this and still not be affected by it? And you find in Daniel that when they come out of the furnace, it says not even the smell of the smoke was found on their garments.

Many of our young people today, no doubt, have to go through educational courses for four or five years. And you go into circumstances where there's a lot of smoke. And how are you going to walk in these circumstances [00:29:05] and your raiment still be undefiled?

There's no trace of it left upon you. There are so many young persons who go through things like that, and they become tainted by the circumstances. Questions arise in their minds. The simplicity of their parents' faith and practice loses something of its appeal. And we feel we have to go on with these things. What a wonderful thing it was in the day when Kirjath Sefer was overthrown.

And so it goes on and on until we come to Acts chapter 19, that the city, with all its educational attractions and all its culture and everything else, [00:30:03] is completely overthrown in our souls. It's very easy to reject Sodom and Gomorrah. Even the natural conscience of man rebels against the features that are found in such a world. But the real trap for many of us is the world of education and culture trying to improve the flesh, even though doctrinally we would sneer at such a thing. Yet practically so many of us can be caught up in it, even in religious matters, even in our assembly lives, trying to impress people with certain features and characteristics that we so eagerly cultivate and labor to acquire.

So we find here that this was, of course, in Asia.

[00:31:07] And that, of course, was the wonderful place at the beginning where there was such a vibrant testimony and where things were overthrown because of the power of apostolic ministry. When we go to Acts chapter 16, we find that Paul there is engaged in his European campaign.

He comes to the first time in Europe.

He has in mind that he's going to acquire territory.

He's going to acquire something for Christ. When he comes there, of course, he comes with Luke. [00:32:02] He comes with Timothy. He comes with Barnabas. I'm sure the authorities in Philippi were not very impressed with an army of four men. What could they accomplish? Well, if you go back to Judges, you will find that there were four men. There was Anakim and his sons. They were men of renown, men who were feared, men who no doubt were great warriors and no doubt caused much havoc.

So Paul approaches Philippi.

He came, as it were, by a straight course. He came under divine direction.

It's interesting to see how the testimony arrived in Europe. They thought of doing one thing or another, [00:33:04] but the Holy Spirit, and then it says the Spirit of Jesus, forbade them because he had in mind this city of Philippi. Philippi was a city that had at one time been taken by Philip of Macedon.

No doubt he had looked upon it. It was in a very good position, something that would help him in his military campaign. Then one day the Romans came along and they thought they would have it. So they acquired it as a colony.

Colonialism today, of course, is rather pejorative. It's rather a bad word, something to be sneered at and looked down upon. [00:34:04] But we know, of course, that the colony under Rome was a city that had the same privileges as Rome. The citizens had certain rights that were denied others in occupied territories. The idea was that they would be more or less like Roman citizens. Of course, when Paul came to such a city as this, what he had in mind was citizenship of an entirely different character. He wanted to occupy it and secure souls, but he had in mind that they would be citizens of heaven.

So we find that he comes to this town.

[00:35:01] Like in the times of Joshua, the first person he contacts is a woman.

It was a man who said, come over into Macedonia and help us. When he got there, the first person he seems to have run into was a woman. I don't know if he had any doubts as to his call, but I'm sure it must have challenged him. Of course, we remember that when the spies first went into the land, the first person they met was a woman. A woman who was very knowledgeable. A woman who knew all the history of the children of Israel. She knew all that God had been doing. She was a woman who knew what had been done in Egypt, what had been done in the wilderness, what had been done to sign and dog [00:36:01] on the very borders of the land. She was very up to date with things, and she had learned things. Therefore, she was prepared soil for the coming of those two spies. So we find it's the same here with this woman. It was a custom for prayer for the women who had assembled. There was a certain woman by name Lydia, seller of purple of the city of Thyatira. No doubt she was Asiatic, although she was the first fruits in a sense of Europe and of Paul's ministry in Europe. Then in the same chapter, of course, you have the earthquake as they had in Jericho. The earthquake, of course, came about because of the power of priestly ministry.

[00:37:05] When you go to Jericho, you will find that all the wall tumbled down because of the blast of priestly trumpets. Paul comes with Barnabas, and what a wonderful trumpet sound there is throughout this city.

There's a testimony to the fact that it's coming down. It's all going to end in ruins.

So we find that Paul comes here.

We find, of course, that it wasn't only Philip who had an eye on this city. It wasn't even the Romans, but the devil himself was very interested in this place. We find that there was a certain female slave [00:38:02] having a spirit of python.

This is the kind of conditions that he met with in his labors. But in spite of the history, in spite of the greatness of the place, we find that he goes on, and as a result, the whole system falls to the ground.

Some people might say, well, it's rather difficult today to work out the truth of things.

Everything is against us. And here we are. We sit in our comfortable meeting rooms with all the conveniences and everything else. We know so little, if anything, about persecution. And it can be said of us, no doubt, that you have not yet resisted unto blood, [00:39:01] as so many dear saints have. Paul and Barnabas are in prison. I can imagine the commotion it would cause in England if they put preachers in prison today.

It might be a very good education for preachers to spend some time in prison. If you go to the Acts of the Apostles, you would find that it was a very good training ground. It would be difficult to find a preacher who hadn't been in jail.

Think of the times that the apostle himself, the various places where he was in jail. You'd think to yourself, something has gone wrong. After all, he's going to be an ambassador for Christ. He's going to appear before kings and those in authority. What's he doing lying in jail?

[00:40:02] But he accepted the restrictions of the circumstances in which he was.

That's something we have to learn at the present time, to make much of this restricted circumstances in which we are.

So what does Paul do? Well, first of all, he turns the prison into a meeting for prayer and praise. Then he turns it into a meeting for the preaching of the gospel.

Then he turns it into a place where he's going to baptize his converts. And then, of course, at the end, he's even breaking bread with those in that household in fellowship with them.

What a wonderful triumph. What a wonderful way of taking a city and securing persons for another kingdom altogether.

[00:41:06] Because we find there's so much opposition.

And today, a great requirement, I believe, amongst us is for men of war, men who are capable, men who are able to take on responsibility. After all, if you have an army, you don't recruit 60, 70 or 80-year-old people, do you? You recruit young men in their 20s and in their 30s. And some of our young men at that age say, well, I'm much too young, much too young. I wonder if any of the disciples recruited by the Lord Jesus were over 30 years of age. I would have the impression most of them would be in their 20s. [00:42:01] I may be mistaken in my impression. It wouldn't be the first time. But how ready are we to commit ourselves?

You see, you'll find in... You'll find those in chapter 19, it speaks of the seven sons of Sceva. That is, persons who had set themselves against the testimony. But when you go to chapter 20, you find the seven sons of Paul.

It says in chapter 20 in verse 4, And there accompanied him as far as Asia, Sopater, son of Pyrrhus, Berea, a Berean, and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius and Timothy of Derbe and of Asia, [00:43:02] Tychicus and Trophimus.

So that Paul always had adequate resources and had men who were suitable for his company and to share in the conflict with him.

And I would leave that with those who are younger this evening. How are we going to finish our days in the testimony?

Paul, of course, had Timothy.

You might say that Timothy was his aide-de-camp, the man who would support him, the man who would be readily available. The question is how much room are we making for Paul amongst us at the present time? Paul says, prepare me also a lodging.

[00:44:05] I wonder if Paul has a lodging place in each one of our assemblies.

There was a wise woman, wasn't there, in 2 Kings, is it, chapter 4? And she was prepared to make room for the prophet. It involved, of course, certain alterations around the house, no doubt a measure

of inconvenience in some way, but she was determined to provide accommodation for the man of God, the one who was a prophet. The question is are we prepared, how much are we prepared to make accommodation, suitable accommodation for the apostle Paul at the present time? He says also, he speaks about the winter coming, and he speaks about the need of a garment. [00:45:02] In those days when the cold chill of orthodoxy and of modernism is sweeping Christendom, how necessary it is that we make such provision.

In Titus, at the end of Titus, he says, I have decided to winter there.

At the end of Philemon, he says, but withal, prepare me also a lodging.

And then, of course, at the end of 2 Timothy 4, he says, use diligence to come to me quickly, for Demas has forsaken me. He's appealing to Timothy, he's appealing to Titus, and he's appealing to the servant [00:46:01] who was returned to his master in Philemon, or to Philemon himself, I'm sorry. So in 2 Timothy 4, it's a matter of desertion. Desertion is one of the greatest crimes a soldier can commit.

But it's a day of desertion, and unfortunately we have seen many prepared to desert from the position. But Paul is concerned, and he says, be on thy guard.

It's the responsibility of a soldier to be on guard at all times, not be like Adam, who didn't take up his responsibilities of guarding as he should have.

And then in Titus, it's a matter of the wintry conditions in the testimony.

[00:47:02] And Paul could look forward, he could see the winter coming, and he wanted provision for such conditions. And these conditions are certainly amongst us at the present time.

Then it's a matter of shelter. Are we prepared to provide accommodation so that the ministry, the service of the apostle can be continued amongst us, that we do not have deserters. We have persons who are prepared to provide all that is necessary for the maintenance of what is Pauline at the present time. May the Lord help us and encourage our hearts that we're not here to have a soft and easy life. We're in an army. We're conscripted. We have no choice. [00:48:01] And there's no exit from it. It's something we're tied to, and we have an obligation to fulfill our duties and responsibilities until the time that the Lord would release us from them.