

Weapons Of Warfare

The Series Part 9

Sacrificial Faithfulness Through Pain & Tribulation

~Embrace The Battle Like It Is Your Birthright- For It Is!~

Focus Verse: Philippians 3:13-17 “Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead, (14) with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (15) Therefore let those of us who are “perfect” embrace this point of view. If you think otherwise, God will reveal to you the error of your ways. (16) Nevertheless, let us live up to the standard that we have already attained. (17) **Be imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and watch carefully those who are living this way, just as you have us as an example.**”

There is a saying that the U.S. Marines are fond of saying. While crude, there is great depth to the implied meaning. “Embrace The Suck!” And I’ve heard another one which is, “The only good day was yesterday.” While to the laymen these might seem like depressing and defeated sayings. But to the soldier, it steadies the mind to not expect the easy path. To come to terms that the road ahead is meant to be hard. And that it doesn’t matter. As they have been trained and conditioned for this. The hard path is the forge of the heart of a soldier. A real warrior is always looking for a worthy battle. A true soldier is only happy fulfilling his calling of the battle.

We find that Paul was fond of using the label “soldier” to describe those who serve the Lord. Being surrounded by the Roman war culture, and the legions of warriors, the people understood his intention of using this term. Let’s take a look at a couple of these examples:

Philippians 2:25 “But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, **fellow soldier**, and your apostle and servant of my need;”

Philemon 1:1-2 “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our beloved fellow worker, (2) to the beloved Apphia, to Archippus, our **fellow soldier**, and to the assembly in your house:”

1 Corinthians 9:7 “What **soldier** ever serves at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and doesn’t eat of its fruit? Or who feeds a flock, and doesn’t drink from the flock’s milk?”

The problem we have here at the end of time is many of the body are “awol” (being absent without given leave) when they are called to service. They desert their post as soon as things get rough. Once the spiritual bullets start flying, they develop a giant yellow streak down their back. Their desire for self preservation makes them forsake those who are counting on them. Leaving the remaining few to fight the battle all alone.

Jesus experienced the effects of cowardice in the line of duty.

John 6:65-69 “He said, “For this cause I have said to you that no one can come to me, unless it is given to him by my Father.” (66) **At this, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.** (67) Jesus said therefore to the twelve, “**You don’t also want to go away, do you?**” (68) Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. (69) We have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus also lamented that there were too few soldiers to fight the battle.

Luke 10:2-3 “Then he said to them, “The harvest is indeed plentiful, **but the laborers are few.** Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he may send out laborers into his harvest. (3) Go your ways. Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.”

Despite these troubles of finding worthy recruits, His stump speech never changed.

Luke 14:25-33 “Now great multitudes were going with him. He turned and said to them, (26) “If anyone comes to me, and doesn’t disregard his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he can’t be my disciple. (27) **Whoever doesn’t bear his own cross, and come after me, can’t be my disciple.** (28) For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doesn’t first sit down and count the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? (29) Or perhaps, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, everyone who sees begins to mock him, (30) saying, ‘This man began to build, and wasn’t able to finish.’ (31) Or **what king, as he goes to encounter another king in war,** will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an envoy, and asks for conditions of peace. (33) **So therefore whoever of you who doesn’t renounce all that he has, he can’t be my disciple.**”

Even to His disciples, His inner groups, the elite Special Forces of spiritual warfare, were warned of their desertion.

John 16:31-33 “Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? (32) Behold, the time is coming, yes, and has now come, that **you will be scattered,** everyone to his own place, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. (33) I have told you these things, that in me you may have peace. **In the world you have trouble;** but cheer up! I have overcome the world.”

This warning for all soldiers of Christ has never changed.

Acts 14:21-22 “When they had preached the Good News to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, (22) strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and **that through many afflictions we must enter into God’s Kingdom.**”

Leaving your post is a court-martial offense in the courts of heaven.

Matthew 10:26-33 “Therefore don’t be afraid of them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed; and hidden that will not be known. (27) What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. (28) Don’t be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, **fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.** (29) “Aren’t two sparrows sold for an assarion coin? Not one of them falls on the ground apart from your Father’s will, (30) but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Therefore don’t be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows. (32) Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven. (33) **But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven.**” **Passive denial is still denial!**

Once enlisted into the Lord’s service, the path will be hard. If you do not give up and desert your post, you will be saved.

Matthew 10:16-22 “Behold, I send you out as sheep among wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (17) But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you. (18) Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations. (19) But when they deliver you up, don’t be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. (20) For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. (21) “Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child. Children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. (22) **You will be hated by all men for my name’s sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved.**”

We are told of an amazing retirement plan for the faithful soldier of Christ.

Revelation 7:13-17 “One of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and from where did they come?” (14) I told him, “My lord, you know.” He said to me, “**These are those who came out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes, and made them white in the Lamb’s blood.** (15) Therefore they are before the throne of God, they serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will spread his tabernacle over them. (16) They will never be hungry, neither thirsty anymore; neither will the sun beat on them, nor any heat; (17) for the Lamb who is in the middle of the throne shepherds them, and leads them to springs of life-giving waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Remember Your Enlistment Papers

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#) “Or don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price.** Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

✓ **When you enlisted, you committed to die to yourself.**

[Romans 6:1-9](#) “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) May it never be! We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer? (3) **Or don’t you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?** (4) We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection; (6) **knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him,** that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin. (7) For he who has died has been freed from sin. (8) But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him; (9) knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no more has dominion over him!”

✓ **When you enlisted, you were called to willingly lay down your physical life.**

[John 12:24-26](#) “Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. (25) **He who loves his life will lose it. He who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life.** (26) If anyone serves me, let him follow me. Where I am, there will my servant also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

✓ **When you enlisted, you agreed to focus on the battle full time.**

[2 Timothy 2:1-6](#) “You therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2) The things which you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (3) **You therefore must endure hardship, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (4) No soldier on duty entangles himself in the affairs of life, that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier.** (5) Also, if anyone competes in athletics, he isn’t crowned unless he has competed by the rules. (6) The farmer who labors must be the first to get a share of the crops.”

Remember Your Enemy and Your Armor

[1 Peter 5:8-11](#) “Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. **Your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (9) Withstand him steadfast in your faith, knowing that your brothers who are in the world are undergoing the same sufferings.** (10) But may the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (11) To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 6:10-18 “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. (11) **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** (12) **For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world’s rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.** (13) **Therefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.** (14) Stand therefore, having the utility belt of truth buckled around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (15) and having fitted your feet with the preparation of the Good News of peace; (16) above all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; (18) with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints:”

An Honest Look At Your Terms Of Service

We are never promised from God or Jesus a pain-free life. We are never told that they will make all our problems go away, that everything will go exactly as we want, or that we will never have to sacrifice for the Kingdom of God. Actually, we are promised that we will suffer, have pain, and sacrifice.

2 Timothy 3:10-12 “But you did follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, steadfastness, (11) persecutions, and sufferings: those things that happened to me at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. I endured those persecutions. The Lord delivered me out of them all. (12) **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**”

We are also told the following:

Romans 8:28 “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.”

We are told these things will work together to provide a more sure future.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,” says Yahweh, “thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future.”

Jesus also tells us that we will be repaid for our labor and sacrifice.

Mark 10:29-31 “Jesus said, “Most certainly I tell you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my sake, and for the sake of the Good News, (30) **but he will receive one hundred times more now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life.** (31) But many who are first will be last; and the last first.”

Proof Cases Of Our Possible Future Suffering

Disciples & Others

When Jesus called the disciples to follow Him, He knew they were being called to their death for the cause of Christ. The invitation was not only to serve Him, but to die for Him as it is to us all.

Luke 14:27 “Whoever doesn’t bear his own cross, and come after me, can’t be my disciple.”

John The Baptist: The Harold Of Christ.

Matthew 3:1-3 “In those days, John the Baptizer came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, (2) “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” (3) For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.”

Mark 6:27-28 “Immediately the king sent out a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring John’s head, and he went and beheaded him in the prison, (28) and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the young lady; and the young lady gave it to her mother.” **Jerusalem*

We must rely on the Bible, Foxe’s Book Of Martyrs, and early church historians to conclude the outcome of all the Disciples.

DATES AND TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE BASED UPON MOST RELIABLE INFORMATION.

Stephen A.D. 35-44

Acts 7:58-60 “They threw him out of the city, and stoned him. The witnesses placed their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. (59) They stoned Stephen as he called out, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” (60) He knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, don’t hold this sin against them!” When he had said this, he fell asleep.” **Jerusalem*

James (Brother of John) A.D. 44

Acts 12:1-2 “Now about that time, King Herod stretched out his hands to oppress some of the assembly. (2) He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.” **Judea*

Philip A.D. 54

Scourged and Crucified at Hierapolis in Phrygia

Matthew A.D. 60

Pinned to the ground and beheaded with a halberd in the city Nadabah, Ethiopia.

James (The Less) A.D. 66

Cast down from the top of the temple, then beaten to death with a club.

● **Matthias Unknown**

Stoned then beheaded in Jerusalem

● **Andrew Unknown**

Killed in Edessa by crucifixion on an X shaped cross.

● **Mark Unknown**

Dragged to pieces in Alexandria.

● **Peter Unknown**

Crucified upside down in Rome.

● **Jude A.D. 72**

Crucified at Edessa, Mesopotamia.

● **Bartholomew Unknown**

Beaten and crucified in India.

● **Thomas Unknown**

Tortured, speared, and thrown into an oven in Calamina, India.

● **John A.D 98**

Only Disciple to escape a violent death.

We should also note that John was the only one of the 12 disciples to go with Jesus to the cross, being unashamed to be seen with Him through His suffering.

John 19:25-27 “But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (26) Therefore when Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing there, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” (27) Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” From that hour, the disciple took her to his own home.”

John fulfilled what Jesus said, not to love your own life unto death. And it seems he received it back again for he did not value his own life more than the comfort of his Lord.

Matthew 16:24-25 “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it.”

We see this same kind of offer being extended to the Church of Philadelphia in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 3:7 “To the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write: “He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one can shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says these things:” **Revelation 3:10** “Because you kept my command to endure, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, which is to come on the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

Extreme obedience and faithfulness provide a better reward than the common soldier will receive.

Paul A.D. 66

Beheaded in Rome.

Paul was called by Jesus.

[Acts 9:4-6](#) “He fell on the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (5) He said, “Who are you, Lord?” The Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. (6) But rise up, and enter into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

[Acts 13:9](#) “But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him,”

When Jesus called Paul he knew that Paul was going to suffer the following things.

[2 Corinthians 11:23-28](#) “Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I am more so; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. (24) Five times from the Jews I received forty stripes minus one. (25) Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I suffered shipwreck. I have been a night and a day in the deep. (26) I have been in travels often, perils of rivers, perils of robbers, perils from my countrymen, perils from the Gentiles, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brothers; (27) in labor and travail, in watching’s often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and in cold and nakedness. (28) Besides those things that are outside, there is that which presses on me daily: anxiety for all the assemblies.”

Jesus A.D. 33

Crucified In Jerusalem For The Sins Of Mankind.

[John 1:29](#) “The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Jesus was scheduled to die from the very start.

[Revelation 13:8](#) “And all dwelling on the earth will worship it, those whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the **Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world.**

Yet, Jesus clearly says that God loved Him from the very start.

[John 17:24](#) “Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may see my glory, which you have given me, **for you loved me before the foundation of the world.**”

Why did Jesus say God loved Him?

John 10:17-18 “Therefore the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. (18) No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. I received this commandment from my Father.”

For in this Sacrifice, God had a plan.

Matthew 25:33-34 “He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. (34) Then the King will tell those on his right hand, ‘**Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;**’”

Now we can see the plan of God.

Revelation 13:8 “All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name **has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb** who has been killed.”

Ephesians 1:3-12 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; (4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without defect before him in love; (5) having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire, (6) to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he freely gave us favor in the Beloved, (7) in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (8) which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, (9) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him (10) to an administration of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, in him; (11) in whom also we were assigned an inheritance, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who does all things after the counsel of his will; (12) to the end that we should be to the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ.”

You see, the life of Jesus meant something of great eternal worth. Now your life can mean something of great eternal worth, if and only if, you are willing to be sacrificed by God, for God, and for His family. Are you willing?

John 15:12-13 “This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. (13) Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

If we do this, the world will know that we are His.

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another. (35) By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

We are not greater than our Lord. We are called to Sacrificial Faithfulness. This is foundation to our relationship with God, just as it was for Jesus and God.

John 15:9-10 “As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you; continue in My love. (10) If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Brothers and sisters, we are built for battle. As Jake Hamilton’s song says, “we have a Father who sends His children off to war.” While the world’s system teaches us to seek a life of comfort and ease, this desire is not from God. We are instilled with the same spirit that brought Jesus to the cross. This holy spirit of Christ that yearns for sacrificial love for God and Man. Self preservation is the enemy of a move of the Holy Spirit. Sacrificial faithfulness is the doorway for a move of the spirit. Something must be offered up to God in order for Him to harness that sacrifice and use it for His purpose. There is nothing greater to offer than one’s own life. Remain at your post and stand your ground and fight with all you are.

Romans 12:1-2 “Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. (2) Don’t be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.”

As we can clearly see, we are not offered the easy path. We are not guaranteed a life of peace and safety. We are promised a life of pain, tribulation, persecution, and sacrifice. Yet in this, we become as our Lord Jesus was on the earth- a sacrifice of love to save others and a means of reaching the lost world. With the eternal reward of life everlasting and peace and comfort for all eternity: With the biggest blessing being in God’s presence forever. This study is what is offered to every Christian. Take it or leave it. The offer doesn’t change. This is the narrow path that few find as it is so foreign to the preservation of self. Radical love expressed through radical obedience, exemplified through radical sacrifice.