

The Church is a Body of Warriors

“One Sunday morning an old cowboy entered a Church service wearing grubby ol’ jeans, a denim shirt, scuffed up boots and a worn out bible. However, the people of the congregation were all dressed with expensive clothes and accessories.

So as the cowboy took a seat, the others not only moved away from him, but neither would they greet or even speak to him, during the whole service. And when the service was over and the old cowboy was leaving, a deacon approached him and asked the cowboy to do him a favor.

He said, ‘Before you come back in here again, why don’t you have a talk with God and ask Him what He thinks would be appropriate attire for coming here to worship.’

So the old cowboy assured the deacon that he would. But sure enough, the next Sunday when he showed up for the services again, he was wearing the same ol’ ragged clothes and was once again completely shunned and ignored.

And sure enough, the deacon approached him again and said, ‘I thought I told you to speak to God about what you should wear before you came back to our Church services.’ And the old cowboy replied, Well, I did.”

And the deacon said, ‘Well, if you spoke to God, what did He tell you was the proper attire for worshiping in here?’

And the cowboy said, ‘Well, sir, God told me that He didn't have a clue what I should wear. He said He's never been here before!’”

Now, how many of you guys have ever been to one of those kind of Church services? Sometimes you really do wonder if God’s there, right? But folks, believe it or not, did you know wondering if God’s really there is not only true for that one congregation? Did you know it’s being repeated every

single day across our whole nation? Hey, that's right! It really is. **How?** By Christians walking around acting like they've got **practical amnesia!** Talk about God being absent!

Oh, we say we know who we are as the Church, but half the time, with our lips and with our lives, we act like we've forgotten who we are. And it's not only detrimental in our walk with Christ. It keeps others from believing in Christ. Therefore, to avoid this **atrocious** of Christian's living like they got practical amnesia by not knowing who they are, we're going to continue our study from the Word of God on the people of God entitled, **“Will the REAL Church Please Stand Up?”**

And we've already seen the **first thing** we need to know about the Church if we're going to stop acting like we've got practical amnesia is that the Church is the **Body of Christ**. The **second thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Brides**. The **third thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of One**. The **fourth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Hope**. The **fifth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Joy**. The **sixth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Love**. The **seventh thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Peace**. The **eighth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Strangers**. The **ninth thing** we need to know is that the

Church is a **Body of Disciples**. The **tenth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Servants**. The **eleventh thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Rebels**. And last time we saw the **twelfth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Worshipers**. And there we saw that even though the Bible says we were supposed to be worshippers of God, what are we doing? The American Church is worshipping all right, we're worshipping anything and everything but God! **Why?** Because we've started **worshipping our things**, we've started **worshipping our titillation**, and we've even started **worshipping our treasure**. And because of that, we're not only ceasing to be a Body of Worshipers, we're actually turning into a Body of **heartless greedy idolaters of man**. And I don't think that's the kind of Church Jesus came to die for, how about you?

But people, believe it or not, did you know that's not the only thing we need to know about the Church if we're going to stop acting like we got practical amnesia? The **thirteenth thing** we need to know is **The Church is a Body of Warriors**. But hey, don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

2 Timothy 2:1-7 "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer.

Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. The Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to look at the Christian life in **three different ways**, didn't he? And notice what they were. He said to run like an athlete, work hard like a farmer, and fight like a what? Fight like a soldier or **warrior**, right! And not only that but **just like a soldier**, we should what? We shouldn't get distracted with civilian life we need to **please who** with our life? Our commanding officer. And can anybody guess what that might be? Jesus!

And here's my point. Surely, we all know this, right? I mean, surely every Christian who's ever lived knows that the Church is to be a **Body of Warriors**, who not only work hard, train hard, fight hard to please their commanding officer but they do so knowing we're in the midst of a great cosmic battle for the souls of men and women and there's no time to waste, right?" Well, you'd think so, but we've got some problems. **Why?** Because if you look at most Churches it doesn't look like we're **honing our skills becoming stronger warriors for God**. Are you kidding! It looks like we're **hiding in the hills trying to run from God!**

So why in the world do we do this? Why do we Christians **who are supposed to be** warriors of God fighting this great cosmic battle, actually looking like we've **stopped** fighting the battle? Hey, great question. I'm glad you asked. It's pretty simple. The **first reason** why we've stopped fighting the great cosmic battle is because **We've Started Denying the Battle.**

Ephesians 6:10-12 "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 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."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. One of the ways we Christians get strong in the Lord is by what? Is it by sleeping with the Bible under our pillow? Or is it taping Gospel tracks to our eyelids? Or maybe it's putting an, "I love Jesus" bumper sticker on our car? No people! What did it say? It was by putting on the full armor of God, right? **Why?** Because what did Paul say? He said not all of our fights and struggles are natural, are they? No! What did he say? He said some of them are actually **supernatural**. Some of them actually come from the devil, right?

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know as **true warriors of God** that there's an actual demonic force out there whose sole purpose is not only lead people to hell but to wreak havoc for Christians on their way to heaven, right? People

are you kidding? We are in trouble! We've been tricked and seduced by the devil. We're losing the battle and here's one of the reasons why. You see, everyone knows that if you want to win a war then one of the weapons you use is the **element of surprise**, the sneak attack, right? And what you do with a sneak attack is convince your enemy that you are nowhere to be found so that just when they relax their stance a little bit, you pounce on them and smash them before they even know what hit them.

So here's the point. Surely we Christians would never fall that that ol' trick would we? I mean come on, didn't we just read that not all of our battles are against flesh and blood but some of them are from a demonic flood, right? People are you kidding! The devil has got us so good that we're are not only **not fighting** the great cosmic battle, but he's actually got us **denying that the battle exists** in the first place! And that's right! For those of you who don't believe me, let's look at what we Christians currently believe about the **supernatural world**.

1. 85% of all Americans identify themselves as Christians.
2. But 39% of Americans say that although Jesus Christ was crucified, He never had a physical resurrection. (Where do they get that from?)
3. Maybe it's from the 35% of Christians who say that although Jesus Christ was crucified, He never had a physical resurrection.
4. 54% of all Americans believe that if a person is generally good in life then they will earn a place in Heaven. (Where do they get that from?)

5. Maybe it's from the 38% of Christians who believe that if a person is good enough they can earn a place in Heaven.
6. Or maybe it's from the 11% of Christians who don't know what will happen when they die.
7. Or maybe it's from the 2% of Christians who believe that when they die they will not go to Heaven.
8. 69% of Americans don't believe that hell is an actual location of physical torment where people may be sent. (Where do they get that from?)
9. Maybe it's from the 65% of Christians who say that satan is "not a living being but is a symbol of evil." (And maybe this is why this Christian made this statement.)
10. "The Christian body in America is immersed in a crisis of Biblical illiteracy. How else can you describe matters when most Church-going adults reject the accuracy of the Bible, reject the existence of satan, claim that Jesus sinned, see no need to evangelize, believe that good works are one of the keys to persuading God to forgive their sins. In many ways, we are living in an age of theological anarchy."

And might I add, theological denial. People I don't know about you, but I'd say the devil's sneak attack is working like a charm, how about you? In fact, I'd say he's doing a great job of getting us to deny the battle, how about you? **Therefore, the point is this.** If we can't stop denying the battle between the devil and God, how in the world can we call ourselves warriors of God? Hello! Do you see the obvious problem there?

Oh, but that's not all. The **second reason** why we've stopped fighting the great cosmic battle is because **We've Started Sabotaging the Battle.**

Galatians 5:13-15 “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself. If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.”

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. Jesus Christ has set us free from sin not so we can engage in sin, but what? So we can get busy serving and loving others because of Him, right? But that’s not all. What was the second reason we need to love each other? To protect us from devouring and destroying each other, right?

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know as **true warriors of God** that there’s a serious danger in not loving each other as Christians because it could eventually lead to our downfall, right? People are you kidding? We are in trouble! We’ve been tricked and seduced by the devil. We’re losing the battle and here’s another reason why. You see, everyone knows that if you want to win a war then one of the weapons you use is the **element of antagonism**. You let your enemy fight all right, but not against you, just against each other. And once they do, you can move in for the easy kill.

So here’s the point. Surely we Christians would never fall that that ol’ trick would we? I mean, surely we know if we spend all of our time fighting each other we’ll never get around to fighting the enemy, right?

People are you kidding! The devil has got us so good that we're not only not only **not fighting** the great cosmic battle, but he's got us actually **sabotaging** the battle! And that's right! For those of you who don't believe me, let's listen to this quote from some former satanists and you tell me if the devil's not working hard to get we Christians to fight amongst ourselves.

“Christians are the satanists worst enemy. They are out to torment you. They are out to blackmail you. They will even kill you. They tried to kill me when I came out from black witchcraft.”

“If you're in a Church where the Spirit of God is really moving and the Word of God is really being preached and where prayer is really going up to heaven for the salvation of souls, then they are going to regard you as their mortal enemy.

They will be out there trying everything they can to destroy, kill and to maim because that is of course the nature of satan and also the nature of his followers. They will try to infiltrate your Church. They will try to set up whispering campaigns against the Pastor and the elders. They may even try to seduce the Pastor.”

“For two years I was involved in a Baptist Church. I was constantly complaining about the Pastor's sermons being too long, too dry, sowing discord among the people and gossiping about others.”

“Some satanists who were handpicked, the most powerful ones, were sent into Church services to disrupt the meeting and we stopped people from going forward when they'd ask people to go forward and accept Christ as their Savior.”

“I personally, in fact, was trained to learn all the Christian jargon. You know like, ‘Hallelujah and praise the Lord’ and say all the right things yet I had no idea of Jesus being my Savior then a man on the moon.”

“If you can tear down the prayer foundation of a Church, then you've destroyed that Church. And that's what every witch or satanist plans to do

when they go into that Church. It's to tear down that prayer foundation. And the rest of the Church goes quickly after that."

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say the devil's doing a pretty good job of getting us to fight against one another, how about you? And gee whiz, by the looks of all the Church problems, Church gossip and Church splits going on, I'd it's not only causing satanic harm, it's working like a charm, how about you? **Therefore, the point is this.** If we can't stop sabotaging the battle between the devil and God, how in the world can we call ourselves warriors of God? Hello! Do you see the obvious problem there?

Oh, but that's not all. The **third reason** why we've stopped fighting the great cosmic battle is because **We've Started Running from the Battle.**

Jonah 1:1-3 "The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. God specifically called Jonah out to do what? To preach His truth against Nineveh the city of wickedness, right? **But here's the point.** What did Jonah do? Did he hop up lickety split to go preach the truth over there? No! He wasted no time in high

tailing it out of there, right? He simply refused to do what God called him to do!

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know as **true warriors of God** unlike Jonah, we jump at the chance to preach God's truth in a world full of wickedness and we'll face any heat or any persecution just for the cause of Christ, right? People are you kidding? We are in trouble! We've been tricked and seduced by the devil. We're losing the battle and here's yet another reason why. You see, everyone knows that if you want to win a war then one of the weapons you use is the **element of moral**, right?

And the **first way** you destroy your enemy's moral is by convincing them they're **no longer qualified to fight** so they'll give up on the fight, right? For instance, maybe you've heard some of the devils' lies before when you've blown it before. Maybe it sounded something like this, "Oh, you blew it now buddy! God won't forgive you for that one! Look at you! And you call yourself a warrior of God? Give me a break you loser!" And people I'm here to tell you, once we buy into that lie, we'll only stop fighting the great cosmic battle, but we'll actually get tricked into sitting down on the battlefield, never to get up again, like this story reveals.

"The Christian life is like standing at one end of a long, narrow street lined on both sides with two-story houses. At the other end of the street stands

Jesus Christ, and as we walk towards Him we grow in maturity. There is absolutely nothing in the street which can keep me from reaching Jesus.

But since this world is influenced by satan, the row of houses on either side are inhabited by beings committed to keeping us from growing strong. So they hang out the windows and call to us,

‘Hey, look over here! I’ve got something you really want!’ or ‘Hey, try this, there’s nothing wrong with it. Or maybe it’s this one, ‘You’re a worthless idiot and boy you failed big this time. God can’t use you now!’

And even though these voices have no real power to block our path, the strategy works all too well. You see, many Christians treat life’s journey like a stroll through a shopping mall, instead of a race through a battlefield! And instead of staying focused on Christ, they give in to window-shopping at the enemy's stores!

And the longer they linger, the easier it is for satan to keep them from running to Christ! The whole tactic is to simply get our eyes off of Jesus, slow down, sit down, stop, and if possible, give up on our journey with Jesus Christ.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say the devil’s doing a pretty good job of getting us to buy into his lies about God’s forgiveness, how about you? And because of it, he’s destroying our moral, is he not? But people my Bible says “greater is He that is in me than he that is in this world” and “if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” **Therefore**, stand up, rise up, and get up on the battlefield of life and start fighting again! **Don’t let him destroy your moral!** Don’t give into his lies! We’re forever qualified to fight because we’re forever forgiven by Christ!

Oh, but that's not all. The **second way** the enemy tries to destroy our moral is to convince us that we **no longer needed to fight**. For instance, when the going gets tough and the battle's raging high, he simply tricks us to go run and hide! Maybe you've heard some of his lies, "You know, I'm getting way too old for this kind of thing. I think it's time to let the young whipper snappers to do from now on." Or maybe it's "I'm getting sick and tired of all these headaches and conflicts and games people play. Let somebody else deal with it. I'm through!" Or maybe it's "I put in my time for the Lord. But now it's my time to go hide out in the hills and enjoy the rest of my life." How many of you heard that before?

But people, stop and think about that logic? Can you imagine if George Washington was getting ready to cross the Delaware and he said, "You know, I'm just getting too old for this kind of thing. You young guys take care of this war. I'm out of here!" Or can you imagine on the beaches of Normandy if the soldiers cried out, "Hey, I'm sick of this conflict. I've got better things to do in life. I quit!" Or can you imagine if Jesus when He was hanging on the cross said, "All right, I've had it with you guys! I'm sick of your games! I'm going back to heaven and enjoy the rest of my life! You're on your own!" Can you imagine that?

Then people, where do we get off as Christians doing the very same thing? I mean, here we are in the midst of the greatest cosmic battle of all time, charged by God to save people from eternal destruction in hell and we think we can just arbitrarily get up and run from the battle? That's not being a warrior of God? That's being a defector of God! But that's right! Don't take my word for it. Let's ask one of the greatest warriors of all time, Alexander the Great!

“Alexander the Great conquered the entire known world and part of his greatness was that he feared nothing at all. Therefore, the one thing he would not tolerate in any of his soldiers was cowardice.

And one day when he was holding court for his army, the Sergeant at Arms brought in one soldier after another and read the accusations against them.

No eyes shifted and no one moved as the king pronounced sentence, often without mercy on one soldier after another. There was none who could deliver out of his hand and often the sentence was death.

Then suddenly came before him a soldier, a young man no more than about seventeen years of age. He was an unusual boy for that part of the world; blond, blue-eyed and handsome. For a moment the king looked at him in silence. No one moved. But they saw the hardness leave the king's face.

So Alexander the Great asked the sergeant, ‘What is his crime?’ And the sergeant replied, ‘He was found fleeing the face of the enemy and was discovered cringing in a cave.’ At that, the king's features hardened again, because the one thing he would not tolerate was cowardice.

But in the terrible silence that followed, as he looked on the boy, a remarkable thing happened. The king's face softened once more and he said, ‘Son, what is your name?’ And with those words, everyone in the hall knew that he had won the king's heart. So the boy breathed a sigh of relief and he answered, ‘My name is Alexander.’

And as soon as he said that the gentleness left the king's face and he said, 'What is your name?' And the boy snapped to attention and replied, 'Alexander, Sir!'

And at that the king exploded out of his chair, grabbed the boy by his tunic, picked him up off his feet and said to him, 'Soldier, change your conduct or change your name!'"

People of God, who do we think we're kidding. If we can't stop denying the battle, if we can't stop sabotaging the battle, and if we can't stop running from the battle, then what do we think we're acting like? We're not acting like a band of Christians. We're acting like a bunch of chickens! **Therefore**, I make the same charge to you today! Christian! **Change your conduct, or change your name!**

And people, that's why if we can't stop **playing Church** instead of being the Church then maybe it's time to **get out of the Church? Why?** Because being a Christian is not a game. What we say and do literally affects the eternal destiny of people around us. Therefore, it's high time we get rid of our **practical amnesia**. We've got to remember who we are! We're not a bunch of namby-pamby-chicken-livered-Harvey-milquetoast wimps. Are you kidding! We're the mighty brave army of the Almighty God! We're His Body. A **Body of Warriors!**

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”
