

**“I AM A SOLDIER FOR CHRIST:
HOW TO WIN THE BATTLE AGAINST EVIL”** (Ephesians 6:10-13)

Copyright 2011 by Dr. Bob Rogers, pastor, First Baptist Church, Rincon, Georgia



INTRODUCTION: *The Lord of the Rings* is based on the books by Christian writer J.R. Tolkien. Tolkien's novels tell the story of the Frodo Baggins, who comes into possession of a powerful evil ring that will entice the strongest and best man to evil. Baggins is a Hobbit, one of the smallest and weakest of the creatures in Middle Earth, yet in order to destroy the evil power of the ring, he must return the ring of evil to its fiery source, marching

into the heart of hell itself. Joining forces with a motley band of companions called the fellowship of the ring, Baggins and his friends set out on a journey to do battle with evil.

The Lord of the Rings is not real, but the battle that it represents is very real, indeed.

Each of us are like the weak Hobbit when it comes to facing the evil of our world. And if there is anything that we have learned in the year 2001, it is that a human being can sink to depths of wickedness and cruelty beyond our comprehension. If anybody doubts that there is a spiritual struggle between good and evil in our world, he has learned nothing from 2001.

God's people are much like the Hobbit in Tolkien's novel. We are weak, and we are small. In fact, many people in the church live lives that don't seem any better than those outside the church. Studies show that members of our churches have as many divorces, are burdened with just as much debt, watch the same filthy movies, have many of the same problems with pornography as unbelievers.

How can we ever win the battle against evil in this state?

It does not have to be like this. We can overcome evil, starting right in our own lives. Jesus said that the "gates of Hell" could not prevail against his church. And God tells us how to win the battle in Ephesians chapter 6.

I. KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A smart soldier knows his weaknesses and his strengths. George Washington's Continental Army was badly outnumbered by the British. He knew he could not win the war by head-to-head battles. So he depended on surprise attacks, attacks from the rear, and he depended on the French army coming to his help. (Norman K. Risjord, *History of the American People*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986, pp. 97-99)

Church, you need to know your weakness and strengths. If you try to face your sin by your own strength and change your life by your own determination, you will go down in flames. But if you will depend upon the Lord's strength, if you will call out to Christ for help, you can overcome.

Verse 10 says, "be strong in the Lord." You cannot win the battle by human effort. You need the Lord. Verse 10 ends, "and in his mighty power." God is the one who has the power to overcome evil. He is your strength. Know where your strength comes from.

II. KNOW YOUR ENEMY

The enemy is not human, just as the power to fight is not in your human strength. Do not make people your enemy. The battle is spiritual, and your enemy is spiritual.

V. 11 “devil’s tactics” (Holman Christian Standard Bible) or “schemes” (NIV)

V. 12 “not flesh and blood”

Verse 12 lists four categories of evil spiritual forces we face: rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil. The enemy is dangerous and real. Don’t underestimate him!

The Bible warns, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)

III. KNOW YOUR BATTLEFIELD

A. *The battle is mental.* V. 11 “schemes” or “tactics”

Satan will seek to tempt you, to deceive you. He is the “father of lies,” the Bible says. Realize when you watch TV, read popular magazines and books, that the dominant world view is not Christian. You are surrounded by attacks on the Biblical understanding of truth and morality. The heroes on TV will live together out of wedlock, and the religious leaders will be depicted as money-hungry, self-righteous bigots. Beware of Satan’s schemes to distort your thinking.

B. *The battle is spiritual.* V. 12 “spiritual forces . . . in the heavenly realms”

Learn to look at the spiritual side of all that happens. When you lose your temper with a clerk who makes a mistake at the checkout line, you may win an argument, but you may lose a spiritual battle, for that clerk may be an unbeliever who knows you are a Christian and is turned from Christ by your behavior.

With all these evil forces in the heavenly realms, you might think that there is no way we could win the battle. But guess who rules the “heavenly realms”? Take a look through Ephesians and you will find out:

1:3 it is where we receive every spiritual blessing

1:20 it is where Christ is seated and reigns

2:6 it is where we rule with Christ

3:10 it is where the church reveals God’s glory!

Yes, the battle is spiritual. And guess who is in control of that battlefield?

IV. PUT ON YOUR FULL ARMOR

V. 11 “Put on the full armor of God”

V. 13 repeats, “Therefore take up the full armor of God”

Notice several things about this:

1) A difference that is not apparent in the NIV. In the NIV, both verses say “put on” the full armor. But the original Greek text uses two different words. In v. 11, he says, “put on” the armor, but in v. 13 the term Paul uses means, “take up” the armor (see NASB, HCSB). So there is a progression here. We put on the armor for defense, but we also take it up for offense. We put it on to get ready, but we take it up to fight.

3) Notice whose armor we put on and take up. It is God’s armor. Remember, we cannot win this on our own strength. We need the Lord. And remember, this is a spiritual battle. People aren’t

the enemy; the devil who has deceived them is the enemy. We don't attack abortion doctors; we attack the idea that a baby is a fetus when the Bible says it is a baby. We put on God's armor and fight with God's weapons, not our own.

4) Notice also that we are to put on and put to use the "full" armor of God. How many Christians have been defeated by Satan because they only used some of the resources God has available to them?

And what is this armor? In the coming weeks on Sunday nights we will take a detailed look at them, but let's summarize them now:

Belt of truth – integrity

Breastplate of righteousness – character

Feet fitted with gospel of peace – testimony

Shield of faith

Helmet of salvation

Sword of Spirit – the Bible

Prayer

If you want to win the battle, don't skimp on the armor. Don't think you can read the Bible without praying. Don't think you can have a testimony without a godly character to back it up. You need all of God's armor.

V. STAND YOUR GROUND

You CAN do it. You CAN win the victory! V. 13 "you may be able to stand your ground." Don't make excuses, Christian. Don't say, "The devil made me do it." You have every piece of armor that you need in your spiritual arsenal to withstand the attacks of Satan, and to win the victory!

Satan is powerful, but Christ in you is more powerful. First John 4:4 says, "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." James 4:7 says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

V. 13 "and after you have done everything, to stand." The words "done everything" mean "to complete the task." In other words, you can finish the battle and win the victory.

The hymn says, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus,

The strife will not be long;

This day the noise of battle,

The next, the victor's song:

To him who overcometh

A crown of life shall be;

He, with the King of glory,

Shall reign eternally."

CONCLUSION: A soldier in an army often has to be reminded of his mission. It is not unusual for his sergeant to bark out his commands, and then to say it again and again.

Church, many of you have heard the words I am about to say, from a sermon I preached before, but I need to hear it again, and maybe you do, too.

I am a soldier in the army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct. Faith, prayer and the Word are my weapons of warfare. I

have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity. I will either retire in this army at the Rapture or die in this army. But I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out. I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable. If my God needs me I am there. If He needs me in the Sunday school, to teach the children, work with the youth, help adults or just sit and learn, He can use me because I am there! . . .

I am a soldier. I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up. I am a soldier. No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me or lure me. I am a soldier. I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name and building His kingdom! No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards or candy, or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to. I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. I will win. . . . The devil cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me, and hell cannot handle me. I am a soldier. Even death cannot destroy me. For when my Commander calls me from His battlefield, He will promote me to captain and then allow me to rule with Him. I am a soldier in the army, and I'm marching claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around.

I am a soldier, marching heavenbound.

Here I stand! Will you stand with me?

(Stand Firm, June 2001)

If you stand up, will you put on the "full" armor of God? What stand is God asking you to take right now? Is there a secret sin in your life that you have been protecting? Will you give it up to God? Is there a calling God has on your life, but you have been scared to say "yes." Will you volunteer now? Don't just stand up in this building— stand up this week Lift high the cross of Jesus, church, and you will win the victory!