

THE

HARVESTER

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

February 1988

No. 026

THE CHRISTIAN FIGHT

Everyone has had to struggle through difficult times in their life. We all have crises from time to time that make our path a little more difficult to travel. But most people don't seem to realize that we are involved in a life or death struggle every day of our lives. Every waking minute we are embroiled in a struggle with the evil forces that surround us. We are constantly faced with many enticing things that Satan dangles in front of our faces. If we are going to be able to defeat him, we must be strong and well equipped for the fight. Before any army enters into battle they always make sure they have made every preparation to strengthen their forces. We also, as soldiers in the Lord's army, must make every preparation before the battle. Paul told

THE HARVESTER
5367 Scanlan Way Dr W
Satsuma, AL 36572-2417

NONPROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
P A I D
SATSUMA, AL
PERMIT NO. 30

us what we need for our battle in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians. We will now look at how he tells all Christians to prepare for the battle, for eternal life.

No soldier can be successful in battle unless he is strong, but no man has the strength to battle the forces of evil alone. So, as any army would do, we must look for an ally to assist us in our battle. Fortunately we can find strength in the Lord, as we read in verse 10: *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."* If we live in the way of the Lord, He will give us the strength to achieve victory.

Another benefit of walking in the Lord is that in so doing we are protecting ourselves with the armor of God. Verse 11 tells us to: *"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."* Regardless of his ability to fight, a soldier is only as good as his armor. That is why we must invest in the highest quality armor available, that which comes from God. But we cannot buy its protection; we must earn it through obedience to his word. A good soldier will wear every piece of his armor, not just what feels comfortable. If someone doesn't wear the *"whole armor of God"*, they are leaving themselves vulnerable to attack in that area. And Satan knows what our weaknesses are and how to take advantage of them.

In verse 12 we find that the battle we are involved in is not temporal: *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* We are very fortunate in this country. We don't have to fight for the right to worship, as did the early disciples and many people still do today. But we do live in a country where the laws allow many things

to occur which are in direct violation of God's law. We do indeed have to contend with "*spiritual wickedness in high places*".

In verse 13 we are once again instructed to put on the whole armor of God: "*Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.*" The reason that we are told to put on the whole armor is so that we can "*withstand in the evil day*". That is any day in which the enemy appears. But since we never know what days this will happen, we must wear the armor every day. Then finally it tells us to stand. No matter how good your armor is, if you sit down and refuse to fight you will be slain by the enemy. So we must stand up and fight with every ounce of our strength, knowing that the armor of God will protect us.

Verse 14 begins the description of the different pieces of the armor that we must wear. And remember that we must wear every piece. "*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.*" Truth is one of the most essential assets of a Christian. If someone is known to be a liar then no one will trust him in anything. He will shed doubt upon everything that he is involved with, including the church. It would be impossible for that person to ever win someone to Christ. He could cause much controversy in the church because of inaccurate reports. Righteousness also, is essential for every good soldier. The breastplate covers the body from the neck to the hips, thus protecting the vital organs. So if our life is one of righteousness, our breastplate will be strong, and the attacks of Satan cannot cause any serious wounds. So truth and righteousness are mandatory if a Christian is to be victorious in his battles.

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

Ray McManus
5367 Scanlan Way Dr W
Satsuma, AL 36572-2417
Ph. (205) 675-5258

Verse 15 tells us that we should also wear the gospel of peace, which is the gospel of Christ: *"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."* If our feet are protected by the gospel of peace then we will walk in the commandments of the Lord. We will also have the ability to *"... walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."* (Ephesians 5:15) It is important for a soldier to have good footgear, because if he slips he leaves himself wide open for attack. But the best footgear can't be bought at the mall; you must get it from God. And the best thing of all, the gospel is free!

Although we have been told to put on the whole armor we are told in verse 16 that one piece of equipment is the most important: *"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."* This doesn't mean, however, that this is all that we need. We must have on the whole armor, in order to not leave an opening for the enemy. But the shield can be moved to the point of attack, and can compensate for weaknesses elsewhere. This protective shield is, of course, our faith in God. If our faith is strong enough it can help to overcome some of our faults. Unfortunately the most vital piece of armor is often the weakest link in some Christian's chain of defense. Faith is often very elusive for some, but we must have it. With it we can successfully ward off all the efforts of Satan to wound us. But if our faith

is small then our shield will also be small, and we will not be able to block all the blows of evil, and we will suffer damage. We might still be able to win the battle if the damage isn't severe, but the stronger our faith is, the better our chances are to come out on top.

Finally in verse 17 we conclude the armaments of a Christian: *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* The last unprotected part of the body is the head, which is to be covered with the hope of salvation. If we have this hope for better things to come, we can use it as an incentive to be a better soldier in the Lord's army. Without this hope there would be no reason to fight. Let us notice that all of this armor protects the front of the body. This means that we are expected to stand our ground and fight. We should not turn and run as a coward.

No soldier would be complete without a weapon, and ours is to be *"the sword of the Spirit"*. We are told that this sword is the word of God. We must arm ourselves with the word and we must be able to fight with it. A weapon is useless unless a soldier knows how to use it efficiently. We must study the scriptures and have them at our command, and be able to wield the sword with expertise in battle. We must be extremely careful how we use a weapon as powerful as this sword. Like any weapon it can be just as deadly for its owner as for the enemy. Let us not forget that *"... the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword ..."*(Hebrews 4:12) Many people today are fighting in the name of Christ, but they are inflicting more damage on the side of good than on the side of evil. They are using the word of God improperly and are leading themselves and many others down the road toward certain catastrophe.

The Christian life can certainly be considered as a never ending war against the powers of darkness. And as in any type of struggle only the strongest and best prepared will survive. This is why we must clothe ourselves with the protection that is offered in Jesus Christ. If we wear the whole armor and become proficient in the use of the sword, we shall most certainly achieve ultimate victory.

TONY WHIDDON
7316 Howells Ferry Rd.
Mobile, AL 36608

FROM THE SCRIPTURES ...

ABOUT MURMURING AGAINST GOD

And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord. (Exo. 16:8)

Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this. (Eccl. 7:10)

Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? (Lam. 3:39)

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? (Rom. 9:19,20)

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. (1 Cor. 10:10)

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: (Phil. 2:14)

AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS

(A Series to Promote Church Attendance)

In Luke 18 Jesus encounters a rich young ruler and uses this to bring out an important lesson on desire. Read Luke 18:18-23. Notice that the young man was to be commended for his keeping of the commandments listed in verse 20. Obviously at an early age he was taught right from wrong and so it was easier for him to obey the "Ten Commandments". He started his training as a little child and continued therein. But then the ruler was asked to do something entirely different than what he was accustomed to doing: give up his riches! This was definitely something he had not learned out of the written law. So he went away sorrowful. He just could not bring himself at this time to give up those earthly possessions. If he never did inherit eternal life, it was not because he was rich. It was because he did not have the DESIRE to give up those riches. It is not the money that condemns us but the *"love of money"* (1 Tim. 6:10)

In a similar manner, many of us have been brought up around the church. As a youth, we would be taken to services on Sunday mornings by our parents. Now what if Jesus should ask us to go beyond that to which we are accustomed? Could we do it?

In Hebrews 10:25 we are exhorted: *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is..."* This means we ought not to abandon the Sunday morning services, or the Sunday night services or the Wednesday night services, or whenever services are held. But some already have! Most members show up on Sunday morning, then they forget about the rest of the week. Why? Maybe they have earthly riches that they are unwilling to give up now.

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 7)

Maybe they were not brought up to go to church more than once a week. Maybe they lack the desire to be with Christians and study the Word.

You see, this is not a matter of how many times a person goes to church but how strong the DESIRE to be there is. When a person really wants to go to the church services, he will usually make it. So if we fail to reach heaven on account of neglectful attendance, it won't be because we did not go to church. It will be because we did not have the proper desire. There is a difference!

RAY

* * * * *

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Feb. 14-20	Jigger, LA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
March 28-30	Moffat Rd. Church Mobile, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Mar. 31- Apr. 3 (Th-Su)	Brushy Creek Church Lucedale, MS 7:00pm	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 3-8	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL	Sonny Riggins (Sylacauga, AL)

* * * * *

ARCADIA, North Carolina! Finally meeting in a new building, we extend a warm welcome to fellow Christians in this area. Services at 10:00am & 7:00pm each Lord's Day. For more info. contact Jack Nance / 4028 Snyder Dr. / Winston-Salem, NC 27127 / Tel. (919) 788-3764.