

### I. The Cost of Freedom and the State of Christianity

For God's people today have lost their value system. We take the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus for granted; every one of us does. We have forgotten the price that was paid to set you and I free spiritually. In both cases, freedom is never free. In both cases, America and Christianity have become passive, lethargic, unmotivated, very lazy, very spoiled, and very self-centered. It all becomes about us.

When you study it down through history, not only does this country have the greatest generation, but Christianity has a great generation too. I have told you many, many times, my goal in building a church is very simple. I am not looking to build a crowd; I am not looking to build some Taj Mahal. I like to just find out in the cave we are in right here. It suits me well.

What I am looking to build, understanding the greatest generation in church history, is a Philadelphian church in the midst of the corruption of the Laodicean system. We know from our chart and our studies in history that the greatest period of time in church history was the Philadelphian church. This was a time when the Bible was believed and preached. It was a time when, through missionary endeavors and the work that was going on, and the great preachers, and the great men and women around this world, literally three-quarters of the world had come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

You and I today are living in the Laodicean church period. This is a time where nobody gets saved anymore, a time that nobody cares, a time where everybody is passive and unmotivated. God's people are only focusing on what they have, what they can get, and what they want. There is no outward looking at what is going on in this world. Yet, I have made it clear from day one that this church is always looking for men and women who are willing to pay the price to do what God has called us to do. Not only are they recorded in the Bible, and we are going to look at some great stories in just a little while, but also in our own written account of church history, of the price that was paid for you and for me to have this Bible that we have in our hands and to have a church like we have.

### II. The Christian as a Soldier

I have never made any apologies for this church. I have never made any apologies for what we believe and what we stand on. I never made any apologies for the standard for which we operate. I truly believe today, just like they believed back in the Philadelphian church, that we are soldiers for Jesus Christ. I believe with all of my heart that we are in a warfare.

I believe that if you have a little experience under your belt and you realize the world you are living in, you would realize that the greatest battles that you face are not the ones that were fought on Iwo Jima, though those were some pretty horrific battles, or Okinawa, or the Battle of the Bulge, or France, or over the Rhine, or wherever in history. The greatest battle... you see, those battles were about countries. Those battles were about who ruled whom. Our battles are

about men and women dying and going to Heaven or going to Hell. Those were temporal battles fought over a piece of ground. The battle that you and I face is much more intense. The battle that you and I face will have a higher standard, a higher price to pay.

Do you know why? Because in the balance of that, it is not a nation or a country or who runs whom. But the balance of that will simply be whether the person sitting next to you dies and goes to Heaven or they die and go to Hell. Whether the person that you work with, the person that you live next to, the person that is your best friend, whether they go to Heaven or they go to Hell, that is the battle.

In that battle, as a soldier of Jesus Christ, there is no place for laziness. There is no place for being spoiled or self-centered. There is no place for being passive or lethargic. There is no place for being unmotivated.

My Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:4:

*No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

When God saves you... Do you know why you never find the word "Christian" in the Bible? Now, I know we use the word "Christian" and I know where it comes from. Did you ever wonder why the word "Christian" is not found in the Bible? It is such a word. "Are you a Christian?" "Yes, I am." Why is the word "Christian" not found in the Bible? I will tell you why. The word "soldier" is.

Instead of being a Christian, why do we not work at being soldiers? Instead of adopting the mindset of a Christian, let us adopt the mindset of a soldier. The Bible says that no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him. Not me, not the person sitting next to you, not your husband, not your wife. Your job is to please Him who has chosen you to be a soldier.

This church has a chain of command just like any combat field unit you will find. Because Hebrews 2:10 says that Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation. We have a command center and orders come down just like they do in any military operation in the world, except ours are found in a book and they are perfect.

2 Timothy 2:3 says:

*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

Look into your hymnal sometimes. Danny sang it this morning: "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" "Onward Christian Soldiers." "Sound the Battle Cry." Song after song after song after song, count them sometime, are written about Christianity, you and me being a soldier, and taking a stand in this war, spiritual warfare, Ephesians chapter 6, that we stand for.

### III. The Church Triumphant vs. The Church Militant

You see, those songwriters understood two great concepts of the church that we have lost today. It is a very simple concept. The first concept is the concept of the church triumphant. Do you know what that means? That means simply put this way: In this life we may lose a few battles, but bless God, we are going to win the war. The church is going to be triumphant. There is going to come a day when Jesus Christ comes back on a white horse and we are following on white horses with Him. The church becomes triumphant. Evil is overcome. Every opposition is crushed. Jesus Christ comes back. We come back with Him, and that will be the church triumphant.

Ah, but there is another aspect, and that is the aspect we live right now in this life. It is really the hardest one.

#### IV. Memorial Day and the Greatest Generation

This is the only weekend in the whole year that we basically just spend the whole weekend together doing something. For those that can do it, we always have a great time. It is always a fun time. Monday is something that I look forward to, a time when I can do for you. So many of you do so much for this church. You have done much for me and my family personally. It is good for me to have a day where I can just do for you. Most of you are off work, and I want you to come and enjoy that day and just have a great time. We always have fun things to do.

I forgot to tell you in the announcements, for those of you who want to go, I hear there is a new Christian movie out we are going to go see tonight at 5:10. It is over on Douglas Street. I do not know anything about it, but it is definitely a Christian movie because it is called Terminator Salvation. I think in this one, the Terminator gets saved. I hope he comes to church. I will make him my head deacon. Take it up with him if you do not like things.

We always have a good time, but not just because of the things we do together. Personally for me, it is kind of a walk down memory lane. It takes me back to my childhood as I was growing up in Ohio. Most of you, and some of you older folks, will probably remember this, but there is a difference between the Memorial Days we have today and the Memorial Days we had back when I was growing up. Our country has kind of strayed away from the military aspect. We like to honor our troops that are fighting overseas and all of those things, but the face of this country is not what it used to be. In the old Memorial Days, boy, I will tell you what, row after row after row of marching soldiers and tanks and self-propelled guns and trucks and everything in the world. As a kid growing up, I really think back on those times and really enjoyed it.

I am part of, I guess I am maybe at the end of what they call the Baby Boomers. How many know what a Baby Boomer is? Let me see your hand. A couple of you. All right. Well, for the rest of you, let me enlighten you. World War II went from 1941 for us up to August 1945 when the war ended. There were hundreds and hundreds, if not millions and millions, of soldiers that were away from their family, away from home overseas, obviously away from their spouses. Many of them were not married. Well, they all came home in September. And then, yes, the babies went boom. In that next couple of years, there were millions of babies born, and that

generation is called the Baby Boomers. It is a generation that comes out of World War II. I am kind of at the end of that, and some of you are part of that.

America had just come out of one of the greatest conflicts that any generation had ever seen, World War II. We lost over 300,000 young men in that war. Many of you that were born during that period of time and grew up in that, you have a better sense of understanding of a lot of things that I am going to say today and maybe better put it in perspective. But I am going to do my best to try to bring it down where you can all grasp it and make some good parallels.

I guess that every century has its great generation. I remember reading the book Tom Brokaw wrote. It was a great book, and it was simply called *The Greatest Generation*. What he did was he took the generation that came up through the Depression and the generation that went into World War II, and the people and the men and the women who literally paid the price to keep this country free and all of the things that they did that you and I might enjoy all that we have today. Memorial Day is a day to remember all those and all our wars that our country has fought and the sacrifices that were made to keep us safe. To me, as I study that and I read those things, there is something special about that generation for me.

I like to read. I think that reading is a lost art today. I think that most kids graduate from school not being very good readers. That is a shame because reading does something for you that probably nothing else does. It broadens your perspective. It brings you to the point where it takes you places that you probably would never get to go. It helps you look at other viewpoints and understand circumstances that people find themselves in. Very frankly, you can pretty much, when you start to talk with someone, tell by the conversation you have if they were a reader or not. Because reading always broadens that person and gives them a depth that you do not find with a person who does not read.

To me, reading about those men and lives, reading about the things that they went through, reading about in our century anyhow, what truly was the greatest generation: men and women who went to great lengths beyond anything that was asked of them. When I find someone like that, when I find in history someone that was faced with overwhelming circumstances, somebody that was faced with things that would put the ordinary person completely out and take them down, when I find someone that gets through those things, someone that finds a way in the midst of the overwhelming circumstances that are just hard to imagine, when I find someone or when I read about someone that goes through that and comes through it, I like to learn. I like to find out what got that person through those things, because that is really what makes that generation great. When I find the real deal, when I find some things that really, really speak to me and show me that situation, I want to learn and glean everything I can about it.

I never approach this day without remembering. All my life I have read and I have studied, I have tried to learn and learn from the ideas and the ideals. Many of them were unsaved people; they are not all saved men. In fact, I would probably say that most of them are not. But there is something in their lives, in their character, in their ability that is missing today, and not only in our country, but I also think in Christianity: men of character, men of courage, men of dedication, and men of sacrifice.

One of the things that I endeavor to do, and most of you know that I am kind of a self-taught military historian. I enjoy all history. I think that history is the key to where we are at and where we are going. I think if you do not know where you have been, you do not know where you are going. If you do not know where you have been and you do not know where you are going, you certainly do not know where you are at. I think it is imperative that our generation understand our roots and where we have come from and the things that we have experienced.

In my life, I have been very lucky, very fortunate. I have had the privilege of interviewing and talking with 24 men who won the Congressional Medal of Honor. 24 men who, in some incredible circumstances, men who, when you read their accounts of the citations of what they did and what they accomplished, it just overwhelms you. I met two in the last two years. I met one of them in the last couple of weeks. I met him at a place where some men were meeting and he was speaking, and I went down and I listened to him. This is why I try to get so many of you to remember last year Memorial Day, we all went down to Liberty Memorial on that Saturday, and boy, what a great time that was. We walked through history, literally, and came away with a better grasp. Many of you said to me, "I understand better now what took place then." It is so vitally important. That is why when we had the thing down at Liberty Memorial a couple of months ago, and all of the men came in with their displays, and there was a Medal of Honor winner there. That is why I encourage you and open it up to the church to bring you down, that you might be able to meet those people, talk to those people, and understand those kind of men and what they have done.

I have always been inspired by men and women who put their lives on the line, doing what they did when they did not have to. I think that is the key right there. The thing that I look for in young men and young ladies in the ministry are many of the same things that you find in these guys right here. What impresses me about God's people today, and you do not find it very often, but what really impresses me is when you take a young man or a young lady, who may be through no circumstances of their own, are faced with something that is a hard way to go, which may be the right way, and an easy way to go, which may not always be the right way. Yet, in their life, they would probably be justified to go this way instead of the hard way. But because of the character, because they want to be better than the average Christian, because they want their life to count something for God, they come to the point in their life where they take the hard route instead of the easy route.

Many of you do not get to see the great victories many times, because in the work that we do, you just cannot get up and always shout it from the rooftop. But boy, there are some times that I would love to. I have watched over the years some of you be faced with unparalleled circumstances. I have watched many of you when you had an easy out. I have watched many of you when you had a way out that probably nobody would have blamed you, and the way that you went was ripped with all kinds of obstacles that you had to overcome and things that you had to deal with. When you had an easy out, you took the right way instead of the easy way. Because of that, God molded you and made you into what you are today and will continue to do so. That is what I look for. That is what I look for.

Our generations, the generation of young people coming up, they have no idea of the price that was paid or the cost that was involved for you and me to be free today. That is a terrible thing. This country has lost the greatest benchmark a nation could ever possess, and that is its roots by which its freedom springs from. We are so far out of touch with all of that.

We watch on ABC and CBS and ABC. You want to talk about a bad perspective? We listen to the NBC and CBS or ABC, whoever you listen to, and they talk about the war in Iraq and the war of Afghanistan. You will hear them say things like, "Well, this week there were 18 men killed, 18 people killed in Iraq, 18 people killed in Afghanistan, 18 people killed this week." That is more than the fighting that has taken place in the last 10 months. They make it like a big deal. People in America, because they have lost their perspective, when they see and hear that in one week's time, 18 of our young precious soldiers gave their life for this country, it taints them toward things like that because our country today is not geared to think of what it costs for a sacrifice to be free. We have lost our perspective.

Coming up here in just a few short weeks will be the 64th year, commemorating D-Day 1944 on Omaha, Utah, Sword, Gold, and Juno Beach. When all of our young men went ashore that day to make the beginnings of taking back Europe from the Nazis, we talk about 18 people killed in a week. On that day in 1944, 10,000 of our young men gave their lives up in one day. In one day. In one day.

We think about the Pacific War. Jim and Marcy, I wanted them to bring their dad here today, but he was not able to come physically. He fought on Iwo Jima. For that little island, which was basically no bigger than Metro Kansas City, 21,000 Japanese secured that island because it was the first of the islands that were the stepping stones of the homeland of Japan. The Japanese lost 20,000 men killed. The United States, in that campaign that only lasted a little over a month, lost 6,891 killed and 18,000 wounded.

In the next battle that took place on the stepping stone was Okinawa. Okinawa was only 600 miles from the Japanese homeland. There, at that great battle that took place there, it was incredible. We had 12,000 of our young men killed and 38,000 wounded. While the Japanese and the civilians in the army lost 207,000 in that battle, which only lasted about a month.

Names like Okinawa, Iwo Jima, Omaha, Utah, Sword, Gold, Juno. Names like the Battle of the Bulge. Names like Bataan, Corregidor. They do not mean anything to us anymore. I will tell you what, the United States was attacked in Pearl Harbor in 1941. This country was ill-prepared for war. This country went through some dark times until about the middle of 1942. After that point, it was not even sure, the Battle of Midway was the turning point, but it was not even for sure that America with all her might was going to be able to throw back the onslaught of the Japanese Empire.

After they attacked Pearl Harbor, the next day they attacked the Aleutian Islands in Alaska. The next day after that, they attacked Wake Island. They attacked in the Philippines and they began to attack and invade the Philippine Islands. No help could come to those Marines and no soldiers. The Marines on Wake Island held out for like 26 days without any supplies, knowing that no help was going to come. When they were faced with annihilation and the Japanese were going to

come in and wipe them out, and almost every man on Wake Island that was captured, when the Japanese knew that they were going to lose the island, when we were taking them back, they marched the ones that were left down to the beach and executed them so they would not be released.

Yet the Marine commander, when he is faced with that, in terrible overwhelming odds, and the Japanese are going to have been bombarding them day and night and there is nothing they can do. When he finally gets the radio thing through and somebody in his upper command says, "What do you need? What can we do for you? What can we try to get to you?" That voice crackling back at that old Marine Corps colonel said, "You know what you can do? Why do you not send us some more Japs?" That was his attitude. That was his attitude.

Yet Wake Island fell, as did Corregidor, as did Bataan. When Bataan and Corregidor fell in the early days of 1942, the Japanese took into captivity almost 60,000 American and Filipino soldiers that were not killed. They made a march 80 some miles to a prison camp, which became known today as the Bataan Death March, where men who had dysentery, men who were sick, men who were wounded, without water, without sleep, without food, were forced to march 80 some miles to a prisoner of war camp. When they fell out, they were bayoneted. When they fell asleep and ran for water, they were shot. Many of them walked down the road who had dysentery, carrying their intestines in their hands.

We have forgotten today the price that was paid. We have forgotten today. The problem is we live in a country where everything is taken for granted. We live in a country today, in a society today, a system without any values. We think everything should be free today, and we take it for granted. Some of you young people, you take your parents for granted, and you think they ought to give everything to you. Well, your parents in many cases are the same way, and they think the government needs to give everything to them free. I am not talking about you guys now, but you know how the system works. Of course, we want somebody or something to pay for it all for us, that we do not have any responsibility. We want to bear no burden, no waiting period, everything right now, and we get real impatient when the results are not immediate.

My dear friend, that mindset, that kind of mindset, we have lost our national sense of pride in ourselves, and we are now a people who have forgotten the sacrifices made and the greatest lessons a country can ever learn and pass on to its future generation. That is simply the concept that freedom, my friend, is never free. Somebody will always have to pay for you and me to be here. Somebody paid a price for you and me to be free and to enjoy what we have.

I was talking two years ago to an old crusty vet of the Normandy invasion. It was the 28th Infantry Division who went ashore in Omaha, took severe casualties. He told me he went back, and we were talking about this is when France was against us and hated us, and everybody wanted to call them American fries instead of French fries, and we were trying to remember all that stuff we were going through. Well, this guy was going back to France for the 55th or whatever it was anniversary of D-Day. He was going, and he was an old guy, he was probably in his 70s, still sharp as a tack. He was walking through, got off the plane in France, in Paris, and he is going through customs. It was very obvious that the French did not like Americans. So he is

going through customs and they are looking at all of this stuff and he is walking through and he forgot to get his passport out. He picked up his bags and the customs official, just a young snip of a guy, said, "Sir, if you are going to commit to this country, do you have a passport?" He said, "Oh, yeah, I have a passport. I am sorry." The guy took his passport from him and said, "You Americans, you think you can go anywhere without a passport just because you are Americans?" Well, that frosted my guy. He looked at him and he said, "Well, I am really sorry, son. I guess I just forgot. The last time I was here in France, nobody asked me for a passport. I got in without one." The kid said, "When in world did you ever come into this country without a passport?" Then he got snarly and he looked at him. He said, "Son, I came ashore June the sixth, nineteen forty-four. Nobody asked me for a passport. In fact, I did not see any Frenchman here when I got here." Then he said, as he walked away, "Sir, you speak German?" "No, I do not." "You are welcome." On he went.

We forgot the price that was paid. We forgot the price that was paid. Yet I have to tell you this morning, I find also the great parallels, not only of our country forgetting the price that was paid, but also what is in the mindset of God's people today. You see, we talk about the church triumphant. It is exciting, is it not? We all get goose pimples. It is all really a great thing. But you see, the reality of life is before you have got to go through to get to the church triumphant, there is another aspect of the church that absolutely nobody knows today. It is called the church militant. It is the fact that you and I need to have a militant attitude toward this world and the things of life, that you and I take a stand for that book, that you and I hold the line with what God has called us to do. That is what those songwriters understood. That is what the greatest generation of Christianity understood. There was a church triumphant, but right now we are in the church militant.

I know Paul understood this great concept in Ephesians chapter 6 where he lays out the seven pieces of the armor of God that you and I are supposed to have. Did you ever notice in Ephesians chapter 6 how he lays it out? He is talking about a soldier. The soldier that he is talking about is not even a Christian soldier. He is giving his version of my sermon, or maybe I am giving my version of his sermon, back there. He is looking at a first century Roman soldier.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I do not know what you know about history, military history or whatever you want. But the bottom line is this: The Roman army was the greatest army to ever march on the face of this planet. They had literally conquered all of the world where Rome's dynasty spread out through all of Europe and all through most of Asia Minor. It was because she got there on the backs of her Roman army. Today at Fort Leavenworth in the commander's school or the General War Staff College, they still teach. They bring men over there. I have got two light colonels that are my friends that teach up there. They still bring in today all around this world soldiers, upper echelon officers to that Fort Leavenworth War College. To this day they talk about the tactics and the way that the Roman Empire fought their battles. Many of our modern day techniques were forged out of the idea that they put together back in the first, second, and third century. Incredible.

Do you know why Paul is describing us as Christians in the light of a first century Roman soldier? Do you have any idea why Paul, when he wanted to tell you and me what we were to be

as God's soldiers, why he chose an unsaved, unregenerate Roman soldier? Anybody have a clue why when he was looking at what he wanted Christianity to be, he picked a Roman soldier to identify it? I will tell you why. I will tell you why. Because in Paul's mind, and I know the way he thinks, Paul is saying, Paul lived. He saw, he was in a Roman jail at the time. He saw the centurions. He saw the Roman soldiers. He knew about the great battles. Do you know what Paul is saying? Paul is saying is this: If I could get God's people, if I could get God's people to stand and fight and to take up the cause of Christ like these Roman soldiers take up the cause of Rome, not only would we win the world, we would win the world for Christ as they won the world for Rome.

## V. Lessons from Military Heroes

Yet I look at the men and the women who have paid great prices down through history. I think of the last guy I talked to. His name was Don Ballard. He lives in Kansas. He won the Medal of Honor with the 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam, 1968. Before he ever won the Medal of Honor, he got eight Purple Hearts. He was a medic. One day, on that particular day, he was going back to bring in some boys from his outfit that had suffered heat exhaustion. He had a perimeter built up there with about 20 guys in it, and suddenly those 20 guys got ambushed by the NVA. Everybody that was in there got wounded. Don got wounded. He had two or three other guys that were on the perimeter trying to hold off at least 700 NVA that were trying to overrun them. Don Ballard was going out under fire and bringing wounded men in, putting his own life at risk, going out and dragging them back to that perimeter. When he had all the men around and it looked like they had it contained of NVA, somebody took a hand grenade and threw it right in the middle, right in the middle of all those 25 men.

Don said, "I did not even think about it. I just, I do not know why I did it. If I had thought about it, I probably would not have done it. I jumped on that grenade. I tried to shield that man from that grenade with my own body." But you talk about the hand of God. The fuse was bad on that grenade, and it did not blow up. He said, "It seemed like it was an eternity waiting to die for that explosion. Finally I said to myself, 'Get rid of it.'" He picked it up. When he picked it up, the movement and threw it, it left his hand and it exploded. He got shrapnel all down his back.

I listened to that man tell me that story. I listened to him with tears down his face, worried about the buddies that were wounded more than his own life. I thought to myself, if I could get God's people, if I could get the people just in this church to care about the person sitting next to them, or the person you are working with, or somebody in your life, if I could just get my people to care about unsaved people. Now, Donald did that. He was a medic second class. Do you know what a medic second class made in 1968 a month? \$198. He did that for \$198. We have the glory of Heaven, the aristocracy of Heaven. We have all the Heaven, the great white, everything that God has for us, all the gold, all the beautiful city. God has all the inheritance that He has for us. And we are not willing to step out. If I could just get God's people to take care of others like he took care of them, an unsaved man.

I tried to witness to him, tried to tell him he was telling you Christ. Do you know what he told me back? I have heard this many, many times. Heard this on a lot of old vets. Here is what he

said. He said, "You know, Bob, I appreciate it. But you know what? My mindset is that I went through my hell there." He said, "I do not think I am ever going to have to worry about going to Hell again because of what I did and the Hell I went through." I thought to myself, there is a brave man, probably one of the bravest men we will ever meet in our life. But when it comes to salvation in God, he is a fool. You did not go through Hell. War may be the closest thing to Hell on this earth. When you get into a real life kick and shoot in war where people die and people get blown apart, it may be the closest thing that you ever get to Hell on this planet. But it is not the real deal yet. The real deal is coming. The real deal is coming.

But you know what? I still believe there are people out there just like that. I believe that I believe the old concept, it is an old concept, that God's faithful few are always in the minority. I believe no matter what, where Christianity goes, I do not care how bad it gets, I do not care how lethargic it gets, I still believe there is always going to be somebody out there, someplace, somewhere that is simply going to come to the point where they say, "I want to stand for God."

I have never had any idea of building a big church. When we got our occupancy code, they said, "Oh, you are good for 600." I thought to myself, "We will never see that day." You see, I am not interested in building a big church. I am really not. This church is a training center. This church is a clearinghouse. This church is a basic training outfit, a chance for men and women to make a difference in their lives, to take and learn how to become a Philadelphian Christian in a corrupt Laodicean church age. It is a situation where you can come to the point where you get the Word of God in your life and you learn how to use the Word of God. It is a place where God weeds out those that can do it and those that cannot. Some make it and some do not. Some do it for a while, then they give up. Some do it for a while, then they get a better deal. Some do it for a while, do not ever want to do it. They come for a while and they find out this is not for them. I have never made any illusion that this church was for everybody. Never. Never.

I am reading a great book right now. Everybody knows the Band of Brothers, you know, have come out back in the 90s with Tom Hanks. It is an incredible series. But it is part of a number of great books. One of the books I am reading right now is called The Band of Brothers: Those That Are Alive and Remain Tell Their Stories. I bought it for one reason. When I saw it was coming out, I thought to myself, "Now this book just is not about battles, wars, people, you know what they did. This book tells you why they think the way they think. This book will give me, as I thought, an insight into the mind behind the greatest generation ever did. Why these guys, I want to hear their stories about why they did what they did." Incredible book.

You know that 101st Airborne, and of course the Band of Brothers is about Easy Company, 101st Airborne. In 1942, airborne, guys that jump out of airplanes in parachutes, was a very new concept. The United States had tried it, but never really did much with it. At about the beginning of 1942, the orders came down that they wanted to put together the first airborne group, the first airborne units, and a call went out for volunteers. When that call went out for the 101st Airborne Division, not the only one, but one of the first ones, there were 5,800 men that joined up from other branches who went into the first batch. They had to endure the hardest training imaginable. They had to do things harder, faster, longer, more than anything else.

I remember one guy told the story how that when he got to Toccoa, which is down in Georgia, he looked up there and he saw this road winding up to this mountain called Currahee. Currahee, by the way, is an Indian name. Currahee was adopted by the official phrase of the 101st Airborne that came through Toccoa. Currahee means "stand alone." He said, "When I got off there, we got settled in. I looked at that road six miles up and six miles down, and I said to myself, 'We will probably have to run that before we are done here.'" He said, "We were not there 30 minutes, and they said, 'Saddle up,' and they ran it." The first day they were there. They ran it twice a day. They ran it in the middle of the night. Any time anybody fell out, he packed his bags and left. On the first run, you think you would give them a week, two weeks to get into it. No, the first run cut half the guys right on the spot.

I read there when these guys, when they asked why they volunteered for the airborne, some of them said, "Well, it was a new challenge, and I was looking for a new challenge." Airborne guys got paid \$50 more a month than ground troops, so many of them did it for the extra \$50, but back there was a lot of money. Some hated the old outfit, and the outfit hated them, so they shipped them out. Some had been bored and never had seen excitement, so they signed up. Those are the ones that did not make it. But some said, "Oh, yeah, some said I heard that this parachute organization was going to be the very best in the world, and I wanted to be the very best." Those are the guys that got through. In that first batch, out of 5,800 men, only 1,200 made the mark. 4,600 got sent back to their units.

I am going to tell you something. When time got tough for those guys, when it was life and death, the grueling days and months of combat without a bath, without hot food, without sleep, the hardship, the cold, the no food, the no sleep, death at every corner, the only thing that got them through was the hardiness and the ability to endure the unendurable. As a Christian, that is the only thing that will carry you through, the self-discipline of your training that sets you apart from other Christians. He said, "Enduring a hardiness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," enduring a hardiness of a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Lieutenant Dick Winters, who retired, Major Dick Winters, or I think it was even Colonel Winters when he retired, he tells the story about Bastogne, the Battle of the Bulge. Now the Battle of the Bulge is not what you are working on when you go to the gym. The Battle of the Bulge is in World War II. When it looked like the war was over, the Germans put one last counter-offensive through the Ardennes, and they pushed an 80-mile bulge in the line, hence the Battle of the Bulge. They rushed the 101st Airborne into Bastogne. Bastogne was a town that had seven roads going into it that was the key to everything. If they lost Bastogne, we could have all been speaking German this morning, and we could have been thrown back into the sea. Then they got to Antwerp and cut the communication line and the supply line, we would have been in trouble. Bastogne was the key, and it was the 101st Airborne that was called in to take care of Bastogne. They got surrounded. Manteuffel's divisions came in there and surrounded all of us, pounded the fire out of them for 21 days. They had no supplies, they had no ammunition, they had down to the place where sometimes the only guys who had two rounds per man to fire if they came after them. No artillery, the clouds were thinned, they could not get any air support,

they had no food, they had no medicine, they froze to death, they had all kinds of problems with frostbite. It was an incredible time that they went through.

Somebody comes in to Dick Winters in his CP and says, "Lieutenant, I do not know if you know it or not, the word just came down, we are surrounded." "We are surrounded." Winters looked back and he said, "We are paratroopers, we are supposed to be surrounded." Where do you find that today in God's people? Where do you find that attitude today? The very tragedies that life throws your way should be the light of God in your life to a lost and dying world. What you go through and the hardships you endure ought to be the things that people see in your life that they do not see in their own life. What is right in your life when things are going terrible, the ability to endure in a hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. People want to see how you and I hold up when everybody around you is folding up. They want to see, do you have what it takes to stand in the gap, to be the man or the woman that God wants you to be? When everything is coming down around your shoulders, do you lose your focus or do you stay focused? Do you have the ability when tragedies befall you in life that you stand strong like a rock that the world sees the difference in you? Or do we fold up just like the world does? Do we give up? Do we quit?

We are God's people. We are supposed to be in the mission of battle. We are supposed to be in the heat of the warfare. We are supposed to have the adversity around us. Anybody here hates you because of your stand for God? Is there anybody out there today maligning your character because of the fact of what you believe? Is there anybody out there that absolutely hates your guts because what you stand for with God? Well, if there is not, you ought to look deep inside and find out where your roots are. You are supposed to be in the midst of conflict. We are God's people. We are to endure a hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We are to hold up when others fold up, giving it your all while others are just giving it all up.

I told you a couple of weeks ago, there are three types of Christians in every church:

1. Those who want to learn how to minister.
2. Those who are ministering.
3. Those who do not want anything to do with ministry.

To me, it is real simple. My job is to keep the number threes as low in this church as I can. I have been mandated by God to train you into soldiers. We have an objective we must take. We have a job we must do. Yes, we are in the last moments of the last days in a world of Christianity that looks like a cesspool. Yes, the adversity is going to come and it is going to be there. But the bottom line, this is where our training pays off. This is where the rubber meets the road. This is where we will make the difference or where we will not.

I am looking for people who do not want to sit on the sidelines, but those who have the self-discipline, the self-motivation, and the ability to want to be the very best for God and who are willing, willing to pay the price to get there through self-sacrifice and the ability to endure a hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No big church for me. I am interested in quality, not quantity. I have learned a great lesson that the great things that God did in life, He did with a small minority: Noah, Gideon, the 12 apostles, the New Testament church. I have said it a

thousand times and I make no bones about it. This church is not for everybody. I make that very clear. Nothing personal taken. Somebody says, "I do not like it here. I want to go someplace else." God bless you. I love you. Best of luck to you. I am not interested in pacifying you. I am interested in training you. I am interested in getting you ready before your Commander-in-Chief comes back to get into a little bit of this fight. Probably Christianity, we have got too many conscientious objectors.

I know I am old school. I know I am as out of touch with this world today as I can be. My mindset about Christianity in the Bible and training people is no nonsense when it comes to the Bible, ministry, commitment to that, accountability to that and responsibility to that. I was trained much harder than any of you will ever be trained by men who were the last of a dying breed who understood the urgency of the time they lived. They equipped me. They equipped me for one reason. They equipped me so I could equip you. I equip you for one reason, that you might be able to equip somebody else. The only purpose we have here, the only purpose we have.

## VI. Spiritual Warfare in Joshua

I remember the stories in the Old Testament, what they illustrate spiritually and how they take place literally in everything that we do. The men, the circumstances, the events that illustrate for us and keeps alive what it means to be a soldier for Jesus Christ. It is that simple. It is that simple. It is just that simple.

I think in the book of Joshua, all the great battles that Joshua fought, every one of those battles is an individual picture of where you and I are at spiritually in the battles we face every day. Joshua was a type of Christ. One of the greatest examples of any man in the Bible that you will find that is leading the nation of Israel like he leads you. The battles they fight are a picture of the battles that you and I fight as those great battles unfold. We see the plan of attack. We see the nations they fight. We see the promises that they fought by. We see the great concept of divide and conquer.

When I read the book of Joshua years ago when I thought about being a soldier for Jesus Christ, when I thought about the ability of enduring a hardness, when I thought and looked at Joshua at the hardships of the literal battle they fought and put it into a spiritual aspect of my life, I found in the book of Joshua three ingredients that we have to have to endure a hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4. A good soldier must be faithful in ministry.
5. A good soldier must be fearless in ministry.
6. A good soldier must be fervent in the ministry.

You take those three things and put them into your life, put them into your world. That is what makes the difference.

Within the book of Joshua, my man Caleb, what a picture for us. What a picture for us. You know there are only two men in the Bible. I talked about 5,800 going into the 101st Airborne and

4,600 of them getting thrown out the side. You realize that Israel got about two million people in it and when they go into the land, only two guys go in, the rest of them get washed out: Joshua and Caleb.

In Joshua 14, you find out what makes Caleb so special. God, give me a church full of Calebs. God, give me a church full of men and women like Caleb. He is 85 years old. In Joshua 14:8 he says, "I have wholly followed the Lord my God." He says, "You know what guys, I am as strong today as I was 45 years ago." He says now, in Joshua 14:12, he says, "Give me my inheritance." "What do you want?" "I want that mountain right there." That is Hebron. "I want that mountain." Somebody said, "Caleb, you cannot have that mountain. You are an old man. That mountain is filled with the Anakims. Those are the giants." He says, "That is my mountain and I want my possession and I am going to go take it." He said, "We will get some guys with you and we will send you up there and take it." "I do not need anybody else." Currahee, stand alone. The last thing you find in Joshua about Caleb, he is going up that mountain with a sword in his hand, a glimmer in his eye and a promise in his heart. He says, "The Lord will be with me. Then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said." The last thing you see him doing, walking up that mountain, claiming his inheritance. A soldier for Jesus Christ.

Do you know what I learned from him? Do you know what we need to learn from him? He taught me the great lesson that nothing was going to stand. Nothing was going to stop him from getting all that God had for him. Wow. Nothing was going to stop him from getting all that God had for him. What will stop you and me from getting all that God has for us? It is the difference between a soldier and a wannabe. It is the difference between somebody who can take the adversity and somebody who cannot.

Oh, I think in David's time, 2 Samuel chapter 23. I remember reading about all the men there that were called and designated David's mighty men of valor. There were probably 600, 800,000 men in Israel's army at that time, and only 37 of them got to be called mighty men of valor. But oh, they taught me some things.

I remember reading the Dean of the Esnite, who by himself, all alone, killed 800 men. Now, I have read commentaries on that passage where the guy said, "Well, that is a scribal error. Somebody put an extra zero there. It should have only been 80." Somebody else said, "Well, that is a scribal error. It should have been just eight." Hard for them to believe that one man could take on and defeat at one time 800 men. That is not too tough when God is on your side. You see, they missed the great spirit. Do you say, "Bob, do you believe that one man went down and killed 800 men by himself?" Absolutely. Absolutely. The spiritual side of that is that God will always put you in overwhelming circumstances. I want to tell you something. You get in God's fight. You get in God's word. The sides, as it looks, will never be easy or never be even. They will always be lopsided. They will always look like there is more against you than is for you. That is the way it goes. That is the way it goes. But the bottom line of the principle you have got to hold on to is greater is He that is in you than is in the world. The principle you have got to hold on to that does not matter. You and God make up the majority. It does not care if the whole world is against you. You can take them on and defeat them as long as He is the Captain of your salvation.

I think of Eleazar, the Ahohite. Now, this is my favorite, I think, of all the guys. He smites the Philistines, got a sword in his hand. The Bible says that he goes down there and he hacks those guys to pieces, and the battle is so intense. The battle is so absolutely intense, and he is fighting and fighting, and he is killing those Philistines, and he is slaughtering them. When he is done after the battle, his muscles in his hand have clamped around the very sword that he had. His muscles became so engrossed with the battle that they reached out, and he froze on his arm, and he could not drop the sword after the battle. That is my goal for every one of you. My goal for every one of you when you realize the Word of God is your sword, and you get in this battle, the intensity will weld this sword to your arm. This book will become a permanent part of your arm, and you will never be able to let it go. That is why I want to teach you young ones how to get the Bible together. That is why we have Institute. That is why we have Thursday night. That is why we have one-on-one. I have one goal, one goal, one goal. It is to fuse your arm to this sword that in the midst of battle, you will never drop it. When you are done, you cannot let it go because it is part of you.

Then I look at Shammah the Hararite. This guy is overwhelmed by a troop of Philistines, but he holds his battle in a bean field. No strategic purpose. It is not a fortress. It is not a city. It is a bean field. He had stood his ground. He says it may be just a bean field, but it is God's bean field. Do you know what that showed me? That showed me that there are no little battles with God. The bean fields are as important as the cities. Where God puts you, folks, is where you stand. Where you stand is where you fight.

I told you many, many times when you come through Ephesians chapter 6 in that great passage about the armor of God, there are two places you do not have any armor. There is no armor on your knees and there is no armor on your back because this battle is fought on your knees in prayer. You do not need it in your back because you are never to turn tail and run. You stay in a bean field and you fight.

I learned from these men the four great principles that you have to have in people and you have to look for in people.

7. The first thing all these men had in common was courage.
8. The second thing they had was determination.
9. The third thing that they had was loyalty.
10. The fourth thing they had was honor.

They would rather die where they are standing than give up an inch of ground.

## VII. The Inheritance and the Judgment Seat of Christ

Lastly, one of the great places in all the Bible. Yet it is a very somber and a very tragic place in the Bible. It is really unknown to most Christians. In fact, I have to tell you, for years until I figured the Bible out, this was one of the most boring places in all of the Bible. You know there are some really boring places in the Bible. Places that when I am reading it, I used to, don't anymore, that I read it five lines at a time just so I could get back to some really good stuff. But you know what I learned over the years? There are no boring places in the Bible. In fact, I

learned this: The places that we think are boring are probably some of the greatest material God ever had for us. I am going to show you what I am talking about. I am going to show you what I am talking about.

Now in Joshua chapter 12, and then it goes 13 up to the end of the book in chapter 24. Joshua 13-24 is where he talks about all the inheritances for the tribes and all the families. It is some of the most incredible, boring stuff you will ever read. I do not know where the places are they are talking about. I did not know the people that he is talking about. I really do not see the pertinent reference to me in going through 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 chapters on all of this stuff. That means absolutely nothing to me. I do not know them. I do not know the places. I do not know where it is at. It was a long time ago. How does it relate to me? Gee, God, I would think you could put some really neat stuff in there. And then he said, "I did, stupid. You just cannot see it." Because before he gets to Joshua 13-24, he records in Joshua 12, all the great battles that they have fought. Israel had fought through major campaigns. I do not know if you know this or not, but they fought over 30 fully equipped armies, hundreds of thousands of little baddest battles and skirmishes that were recorded and some not recorded. But before he ever gets to the inheritance, he goes through the battles they fought.

Jimmy, would you bring my little aid up today? I am going to give you a little lesson today. I am going to give you a lesson on how to identify and read a combat soldier. You see them all the time. Most people look at them. They know nothing about them. They see all the little stuff on them. I want to show you something that I want to bring it back to a parallel. Jimmy, put it right here. I am going to show you something that is the most incredible thing you have ever saw in your life. Excuse me, Mr. Pons. This uniform belonged to John R. Pons. John R. Pons was with the 101st Airborne, 502nd H Company. He jumped in Normandy, fought up through the Battle of the Bulge, fought up almost all the end of the war. You look at this guy and you see all kinds of things on his uniform, all kinds of things. The average person sees this has no idea how to read a combat uniform. This tells you everything you want to know about Mr. Pons. I have given you his name. He lived in Brunswick, Maryland. He died in 1996. Has no family left. His wife died 12 years before he did.

Here is Mr. Pons. What do we find out about Mr. Pons?

*The first thing we want to know about Mr. Pons is this: See that patch right there? Mr. Pons was part of the 101st Airborne, commonly called the Screaming Eagles. On this side, you have his patch that was the first Allied Airborne. Let me tell you something about patches on a uniform. You always want to remember, the patch on this side, which is his left side, will always be the present day combat unit he is with. The one on this side will always be the last combat unit he was assigned to before he went through this one. Still true today. You can see an Army guy at the airport. You can see this and that. You will see that he has got maybe a 21st, 25th Infantry Division on this one and a big red one on this one. That means he is with the Big Red One now. He was with the 25th Infantry Division before.*

*These here, it is called Hash Marks. Every one of those represents six months overseas in a foreign country. Mr. Pons was in Europe for two years.*

*This here, this is called a Pathfinder Patch. It is a flaming torch or a wing with a torch. Do you know what that means? That means Mr. Pons was one of the few airborne troopers that before the main event of the jump, and you know what happened with the 101st Airborne. Before Normandy, before that morning when they all came ashore, the 82nd Airborne, the 101st Airborne, the British 6th Airborne, they all jumped in behind the lines after midnight to disrupt them. Some 25,000 paratroopers went in. But before those 25,000 paratroopers went in, a small group went in. They were called Pathfinders. They jumped in two hours before the main paratroopers came in. The Pathfinder's job was to find the drop zone that was going to drop and light it up so the planes coming in. Pathfinders were six-man teams. In other words, six men dropped into occupied Europe in the middle of Germany and the middle of World War II all by themselves to light the drop zone. Mr. Pons was one of those Pathfinders.*

*He is a Staff Sergeant. You know that by the stripes on his sleeves.*

*When you look on his chest, you will find the first thing he has got up here we will talk about is his parachute qualification badge. It is a little parachute with wings. Mr. Pons earned that at Camp Toccoa with the rest of 101st Airborne.*

*You are going to find the next thing about it is down here is a blue field with a rifle on it. That is called a CIB. That is called a Combat Infantryman's Badge. That CIB right there is the most coveted award a military man can have. A CIB on your chest means that you were under fire for at least 60 days nonstop. It is the badge of honor for every combat infantryman in any war. We still pass them out today. Every boy over there in Afghanistan that fought on the line or fought in combat gets a CIB. A CIB is absolutely the most sought after, the most absolute personal identity, that badge of honor for next maybe to the Airborne Wing.*

*Then we have his ribbon bar. Now ribbon bars represent a number of things. The American theater in Europe was divided into 19 different campaigns. Every campaign had a different ribbon bar. The Pacific was broken down into also 19 or 20 campaigns. Mr. Pons fought in the European theater. So this first little badge right here on it, this brown, white, and green is his European theater campaign. You notice he has three stars on it. Those are called battle stars. That means that he was in the European theater and he fought in three major battles. He himself fought in Normandy, Battle of the Bulge, and then I am sure he fought in Alsace-Lorraine and on up through there.*

*The next one here is his good conduct medal. A good conduct medal means he was a soldier of character.*

*The most highly prized one he has is his Purple Heart. Mr. Pons was wounded two times. Hence he has a palm leaf on that which represents two wounds. Purple Heart by itself was one wound. When they get wounded the second time, they put a palm leaf on it instead of giving them another medal. That palm leaf says that Mr. Pons was wounded two times in his tour.*

*Over on this side, you have what is called the Presidential Unit Citation. That was given to the 101st Airborne for their drop in Normandy, also given them for the Battle of the Bulge, and also*

*given to them for the Alsace-Lorraine. He has two palms on that, denoting that he has three altogether.*

*On this side he has his Cross Rifles, which means he is an infantryman, parachute infantryman. On this side he has his U.S., which is designated the United States.*

That is how you read a combat uniform. Now you say, "What in the world has that got to do with the morning sermon?" Absolutely nothing, but I just wanted to do this for a long time, so I thought I would do it. No, certainly not. Mr. Pons will go over here now.

I said all that to say this. The lesson is very clear. When I come to Joshua 13-24, he lays out the inheritance. They had just come through 30 battles with 30 armies, come through some most horrendous fighting for 40 years, and now they get their inheritance. Do you know what that represents, ladies and gentlemen? That represents spiritually the Judgment Seat of Christ for you and for me. It represents the day that you and I, when we go to Heaven, that we stand before God, and God gives us the Millennial Inheritance that we have. It means that we get the rewards that God has for us because we endure the hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Now, you better get this. You can forget everything else I have said today, but you had better get this next thing that I am telling you. That thing is in there for a reason. What I thought was the most boring chapter in the Bible turned out to be one of the most unbelievable, incredible chapters anywhere in all of the Bible or portions of the Word of God, because it showed me that before they got their Millennial Inheritance, before they got what God had for them, before they took possession of their inheritance, which represents you and my Millennial Inheritance, God had a chapter that reviewed the battles that they had fought in, and God reviewed the battles and the campaigns and the men that they had fought with, and the battles that they fought and the armies they were up against, and all the things that they went through, and before they ever got their inheritance, God says, "Let us stop and look at what we have got and see how much you participated in this."

Let me tell you something. Let me tell you something. This is the lesson. Before you get your Millennial Inheritance, there will be a review of your combat and your campaigns of this life that you fought in for Jesus Christ as a good soldier. Just say to you, my friend, do not get caught at the Judgment Seat of Christ without a ribbon bar. Do not get caught at the Judgment Seat of Christ without your C.I.B. Get your perspective, get it straight, change about you, whatever you have got to change, do not. Do not show up at the Judgment Seat of Christ without being in some campaign. Get some battle stars. Get your C.I.B. Get your presidential citation. Get you some stuff on your chest that when you stand before your Commander-in-Chief, He knows where you have been and the battles you fought by the ribbons of the campaigns you fought for Him on planet Earth. That is what that passage is telling you.

At the end of his life, Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7:

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

Those were his battles. He said, "I fought a good fight." Let me ask you a question. Are you fighting a good fight? What conflicts are you in right now? Not because of our own stupidity, but

because of your stand for the Word of God and truth. You are in a war. There is going to be a price to pay. You have got to understand, my friend, Paul said, "I fought a good fight." Are you fighting a good fight? He says, "I finished my course." Will you? The course, my friend, is the plan that God had for you the day you got saved, where He wants you to go based on what you become, what He wants you to accomplish, what He wants you to do, what He wants you to get involved in, the job that He has for you to do in this church. Will you finish that course? "I have kept the faith," have you? Have you?

I remember a time when some of you were so excited about the Word of God and seeing people saved you could not sleep at night. Now it does not bother you anymore. The Bible means nothing to you. People lost means nothing to you. You were excited about the Bible. You are not excited anymore. What is wrong? I will tell you what is wrong. You lost the faith of that book that gives you everything you need to stand in this fight. He says, "I fought a good fight." Are you? "I finished my course." Will you? "I have kept the faith," have you?

2 Timothy 4:8:

*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

He, my friend, we are in a war. God has called you to be a soldier. My job is to train you. I would rather have 50 people who are hard chargers and committed than 300 pacifists. I would rather have 50 men and women who are determined that they are going to learn how to minister, they are going to minister, and they are going to get that book down, and they are going to do whatever it takes to learn that book so they can get in a little piece of this action before it is all over. Because it is going to be over before you know it, and some of you are lacking your campaign ribbons. You need to get into some battles. You need to get some shoulder patches with distinction. You need to begin to look at yourself as a cut above the rest, somebody that wants to be everything that God wants them to be, with the endurance to be able to do what you have got to do to get there.

We are in a war. Yet the Bible says the weapons of our warfare are spiritual and not carnal. The Bible says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We wrestle against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. We have to fight and guard against people in your life that want to take your love from God. We have to worry about people who when they start to get out of fellowship with God, they want to draw you with them because misery loves company. You have got to guard against the things in this world and the people in this world and the places where it will take your love from God that God put into your heart and get you the purpose to finish the course and take that from you. That is where the battle is. That is where you have got to determine. That is where the term Currahee, stand alone, really comes in. You have to get to the place where if you have to, you can stand by yourself. If you have to, you do not need anybody else. You can stand on your own. It is nice to have them. I know that is the concept in Bible Christianity, but the bottom line is someday God may put you in a circumstance, put you in a situation and put you in a place where you are all by yourself and you are either going to stand up or fold up. It will be what you do with all the things that we do. It will be what you do with all

the things that we do. It will be what you do with our Bible studies for you young people that want to learn that Bible, who work with me, get it to the place where you can get the next level and the next step.

We are standing on with our athletic program, one of the greatest outreach. We probably have 40 or 50 young men and young ladies that do not go to church anywhere. The world looks at that as a softball league. I look at it as an outreach to reach these people for Christ, but there is going to be a price to pay. Are you willing to pay it? That is the key.

Yes, my friend, in any battle, and I hate to say this, it is the hardest part of the ministry. You will have casualties. Not everybody is going to make it. Every Memorial Day, I preach a sermon similar to this because it goes with the day. I guarantee you, probably by this time next year, some of you will not be here anymore. It is a tragic thing to say, but it is true. It is the reality of it. Wherever there is war, wherever there is conflict, there are casualties. I wish it did not have to be, but it is.

I do not know how many of you have ever seen the miniseries Band of Brothers. For me, the greatest part of that whole series is found in the one it talks about where they are breaking down. Where the Easy Company have been on the line now since Normandy. They have just finished a battle of the Bulge and they are in these woods and it is absolutely just incredible. Now, tomorrow, without food, without rest, they have got to attack the town of Foy. They get decimated. That night, in the closing scenes of that segment, they are all sitting in a little church. The nuns have brought in a group of schoolgirls to sing for them and they are all sitting there. The narrative begins to pick up and tell the story and you see all the Easy Company guys sitting in there listening, thoughts far away. Then the guy begins to talk about the fact that when Easy Company went into Belgium, they had 134 men. He says, "Now, as they get pulled out and go back to a rest area, they are only 65 men strong." Everybody else has been wounded and killed. There, as he talks, there are all of those guys that are standing there and one by one, he names them and their faces fade out of that crowd. He talks about this guy and his face is gone. He talks about this guy, he is gone. He talks about this guy and he is gone. One by one, that great crowd of Easy Company from 134 men goes down to just 64 faces where they are left.

Wherever there is war, folks, there are casualties. The ministry is looking at the men and the women who fell by the wayside. Some of them we probably could have helped. We did not. Some of them probably are in the mess they are in because some of you did not do what you needed to do when the line was there. Some of them, nothing we could do. You know what? The difference between World War II and Easy Company and their casualties and our casualties, the bottom line is this: They lived in a situation where somebody else was trying to kill them. We live in a situation where we kill ourselves. We put those things in our lives that are detrimental to our Christian walk. We allow people, places, things, circumstances to come in. We have the choice whether we are a casualty or not. This is where the real hardness and the endurance comes in, ladies and gentlemen. This is what we are looking for. This is what we are talking about. Men and women who will grasp the vision and understand the concept, who will let me help them learn the Bible, get them feet on the ground, get them to the place where they can stand and do something for God and then come Hell or high water, whatever happens. They are ingrained and

entrenched in the principles of the Word of God and that becomes your focus. Everything else becomes second place. Everything else revolves around you finishing in your course, you keeping the faith. For henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

Every head bowed and every eye closed.