

I forgot to tell you, I didn't do the prayer list today. Everything is the same on it, but one thing I want to add is that Kelly and Woody are out in Wyoming. His mom passed away several months ago, and they were having a memorial service with people coming from his family. We've already seen a couple of people get saved from that, and he's preaching the funeral this morning, so pray for him. Tara and Bubba went out to support him and went out there with him, and I do appreciate that too. So pray for him out there. Everything else is pretty much on track the way it was.

Also, Danny wants to meet with all the people who work in the Timothy ministry, not the kids, but the singles. If you're graduating from high school and you're now going to be in that realm, if you'd like to work in the Timothy ministry, we'd love to have you. It's probably one of the best things that we have that really helps young men and young ladies develop their teaching skills and their ministry skills. I would really encourage you to do that. You can go to that meeting today, and while you guys are up there, help them set up the tables for tomorrow. That worked really good.

## I. Reading a Soldier's Uniform

Today, I'm going to do something special. I've done this for many high schools before they got anti-military. I have a hippie mannequin that I usually take now, but this seems a little orthodox, but it's not. As you know, I'm a quasi-military historian and military collector. I've been collecting military stuff for about 50 years. I got my first helmet when I was 16 years old, and I've added to it from that.

What I wanted to do today is simply this: don't get scared when I do this. It's Memorial Day, and I want to teach you, because most people don't know this, how to read a soldier's uniform. You see them all the time: at events, in bus stations, in airports, wherever. Most of the time, you just look at them and you say, "Yes." But every soldier and the uniform he wears will speak from where he's been and what he's done, if you know what to look for. I'm going to tie this into the Bible here just a little bit. I know you're sitting there thinking, "How are you going to do that?" Well, only I could. But I want to begin piece by piece to show you what to look for.

Now, this is a World War II slice. The guy went into Korea. I don't know who it was; I got it out of his estate sale years and years and years ago, but I call this guy Sergeant Rock. This guy had been some places, and he'd done some things. I want to talk to you about when you see a soldier, how you can tell if he's a combat vet or not, or what he's done or what he's been into. So I'm going to take some time this morning and walk through this, and then we're going to go into the Bible and look at it. I want to educate you because what I'm about to show you here is really going to apply if you're a Christian in your spiritual warfare.

## II. Decoding the Uniform: Patches, Rank, and Service

First off, the first thing I want you to see, if you would see this guy, if you could look over here on his right shoulder, he's got an airborne patch. That is the 187th Airborne. The 187th Airborne came out of the 11th Airborne in World War II. There was no 187th in World War II; it was a Korean War deal that came out of the 11th. The 11th Airborne is on this side.

The first thing you want to realize is that in the military, and basically some of the branches are different (the Marine Corps doesn't always wear their shoulder patches, the Air Force doesn't, the Navy doesn't, but many of the things are the same, so you just have to take that into consideration). But the first thing you want to remember is that in an Army unit, your combat patch always goes on this sleeve. In other words, when he was in World War II, the 11th Airborne was on this side. When he got out of the 11th, because the 187th came out of the 11th, he puts his World War II combat patch on that side, and that is his patch that he's currently serving under in the 187th Airborne.

So when I would see this guy, the first thing I would know is that the 11th Airborne was an airborne unit that fought in the Pacific Theater. In the European Theater, you had the 101st, you had the 82nd, you had the 17th Airborne, and some other units that were associated with that. But in the Pacific, the 11th Airborne was the airborne unit that did all of the operations that required airborne qualification. So the first thing I see about this guy is the fact that he's airborne in both cases.

The next thing I see is that he's a three-striped sergeant. They call that in the military a buck sergeant. That's the first line of sergeant. It would go from private, which would be one stripe, two would be a corporal, and then three, he would be a sergeant. He would be in charge of a squad of men, probably 18 to 20 guys back in that time period. He would be a squad leader with those three stripes.

As you look at this, you see, the military has terms for everything. We look at them, and you know, the military is a completely different culture. You guys who are in, you know that. It has its own language, it has its own chain of command. These are called hash marks. He got one of these for being overseas every six months. Every six months he's overseas, he gets another one. So he was overseas for two years in World War II. If he, and I don't know why he doesn't have one, maybe he just didn't put it on, but he should have a hash mark that was a slice down there, and that would tell you how many hitches he's had in the military. For whatever reason, he didn't put his on. But anyway, these in the military are called Hershey Bars. Don't ask me why, but that's what they call them. They're called Hershey Bars.

On the other sleeve, he has what we call the Meritorious Service Award, for those of you that can see it. This was given to a unit that had served six months with distinction, or the last six months of distinction, in World War II anyhow, in a combat zone. It was called the Meritorious Service. In the military, they called that a toilet seat. I'm sorry, if you want me to flower it up, it was a potty seat, but the bottom line is what it is. So we see this guy, we can tell from him.

Now his hat up here is, again, he has the airborne flash on this side, which means he's airborne. You notice it has a parachute and a little airplane on it. That's because in World War II, you had not only guys that jumped out of airplanes and parachuted down, but you had guys that came in

gliders. They were the glider units. So the patch that they wore had a parachute on it and a glider, depending on whatever unit he was in. Notice, this is kind of faded, but notice it's piped in blue. Blue piping on a hat will tell you that he's infantry. Every branch of the service had a different piping. If you were in the engineers, your piping was black. If you were in signals, your piping was yellow. If you were a recruiter, your piping was orange. Everybody had a different piping on it, but when you saw blue, then you knew that the guy was infantry. That was always a giveaway.

So if I'm walking down the street, or I see this guy, when I first get a glance at him, I see he's an airborne guy. I see that he was in the 11th in World War II. I see he's now in the 187th, which was in Korea. I also see that he's fully qualified with his patch and his hat, that he's airborne infantry, as they would say.

### III. Decoding the Uniform: Medals and Ribbons

Then I would start to look at his medals. This guy, you don't see this very often, but this guy, usually the medal bars are just real medals, and they're on a bar that you pin onto your uniform. Sometimes these guys took real pride in what they were doing. He took every one of his medals, and they're not, they're handmade. They're expertly done. Then he had them all sewed on one piece of cloth, and then they sewed that one piece of cloth through his uniform. You don't see that very often. That's pretty distinctive; the guy was pretty proud of what he was. I wish I'd known who this guy was, but I never did.

Just look at this. The first thing you're going to see up here is this blue shield with a musket on it. That is called a Combat Infantryman's Badge, short CIB. That is the most, for an infantryman, that is probably any soldier, the most coveted award that you can get. During World War II, that signifies that for 60 days, you were under continuous combat, and they had to do that to earn that badge. It's been called the most dangerous award that a guy could get, because you had to be in actual combat, heavy combat, to get that award. I think the times are probably varied of when you can get it from back then to maybe what it is now, if they're even still giving it out now, I'm not sure.

Then you look down here and you see his ribbon bar. In the military, your ribbons go from the highest medal down. In other words, your first medal will be your highest award, then your second one, and then your third one, your fourth one, your fifth one, and then on down the line. His first medal bar is a Silver Star. The Silver Star is the third highest award in the military, Navy, and Marine Corps. It runs Congressional Medal of Honor, that's number one. It runs the Distinguished Service Cross, that's number two. Then it runs a Silver Star. So this guy won a Silver Star. They don't pass out the Silver Star for passing out candy bars in the PX. You have to be in some stuff, as this guy obviously was. Whatever he did, and they actually have a list. I've never really looked it up because I don't know his name. But if I knew his name, there's actually a list of everybody who received a Silver Star award, and I could track him down and find out how he got it. But I don't have that. The Silver Star is his highest award, and that is for valor under combat. Lord only knows what he did. But it's that little blue and white one there.

The next ribbon that he has is also a combat award, and that is a Bronze Star. The Bronze Star is the fourth highest up the ladder. You get that for valor in combat too. When you begin to look at a guy's medals, sometimes you'll see a little oak leaf on him. That oak leaf means that he's got multiple awards. He would put as many as four; if he won four Bronze Stars, he would put as many as four oak leaves on it. When he got the fifth, if he's still alive, he would put a silver one, and that represents that he's got five. But he's won two Silver Stars, or Silver Bronze Stars. Again, I don't know what he did, but it shows you that when you were walking down the street and you see that guy, the first thing I'd see is he's got a Silver Star, and he's got a Bronze Star, and he won that twice. Maybe he won one in World War II, and he won one in Korea, I don't know. The 187th made two combat jumps in Korea, Incheon, and they jumped in there when MacArthur tried to bust up the Korean Peninsula. So I don't know if he jumped in that or not, but probably he did.

Now, his next award is the Purple Heart. The Purple Heart is the oldest medal in military history. It was instituted by George Washington in the Revolutionary War, and you get that for wounds. The Purple Heart is, as I've said before, purple in nature with white stripes on each end. Here again, this guy, if I was walking down the street and seeing this guy, this is where I got that this guy was in some combat, because he's got the Purple Heart, but he's got three oak leaves on it. That means he was wounded four times. He's got four Purple Hearts. I don't know if from World War II, all in Korea, or where, but he was wounded four times in his combat.

Then of course, the next one you have is his Good Conduct Medal. You got that for being six months or a year, whatever, however they worked it out, whenever the timeframe was, that you never got in trouble and you had good conduct. So you got a Good Conduct Medal. On this one, he's got the Good Conduct Medal here, and instead of putting oak leaves on it, you get a little bar there, and on the bar is a star. So he's got three on his bar, so that means he would kill you in combat. He was a nice guy when he went back to the base. He got four Good Conduct Medals. That's hard for me to believe. Most guys that get into combat that are fighting not only on the battlefield, they're fighting at every bar in town on Saturday night. But evidently, this guy, maybe he was a Christian, I don't know, but anyway. But you can see there that the Good Conduct Medal with a bar on it.

The next one he got here was the, this was a World War II, and this was kind of like a national defense medal. Everybody got that just by going in. Jumping down here, and here's where it gets kind of interesting, every theater of operation in World War II had a different ribbon bar. This one would be significant for the Pacific Theater. It's a yellow one, and the European one is black and brown. Here again, on his ribbon bar, he got three stars. That means that he fought in World War II in three major engagements. For every campaign you fight in, whether you jumped like in, he wouldn't have, but let's just say in Normandy, Bastogne, Alsace, France, wherever you fought in a campaign, you got a star for it. So in World War II, he fought in three. If he jumped, he probably jumped in the Philippines. The 11th Airborne was the only airborne unit that jumped into a prisoner of war camp during World War II and liberated the prisoners. It was a pretty daring deal, and so maybe he was with that, I don't know.

The next one here that he's got is the Victory Medal for World War II. Once we won World War II, everybody got a Victory Medal. That's what he's wearing there. This one here, this black and white and red one, I'll show you these three, there's the yellow one and then there's that one and there's that one, that one, that one and that one. That is his Occupation Medal. At the end of World War II, we left troops in Europe and also in the Japanese theater or the Pacific theater. The medal for the occupation was the same. At the end of World War II, the 82nd Airborne in Germany stayed till 1946. Most people don't know that. The war was over in 1945 around May of '45 when Hitler died and then they capitulated. But the 82nd Airborne was in the European thing till 1946. And then they came home. The 11th Airborne, which he was, was in Japan. At the end of the war, the 11th Airborne went in as occupation troops. General Doug MacArthur became the commander there and became the Supreme Governor of that time, and they tried to keep the Russians out. That's why they really stayed and to help rebuild. So they stayed there in Japan up through past the Korean War, which is 1950 to 1953. So he obviously stayed in the occupation. He stayed in the military. I'm not sure why I could say he don't have his hash mark on, but maybe he just didn't like it enough to put it on.

Then the next thing we see is his, another kind of civil defense national defense medal that he had here. This would have been during the Korean War. Then his last two medals are his combat campaign weapons for Korea. If I'm looking at this guy, I know he's airborne. I know he's infantry. I know he's been in some stuff. He's got his CIB. He's got a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars. He's been wounded four times. He's got a Good Conduct Medal. He got that five times. And then he's got this. Then I see that he was in the Pacific, which goes along with the 11th Airborne. Then he was in three major campaigns. He was in the occupation. Then he went to Korea. And he's got three major campaigns there. That lines up with the 187th Airborne on that side. And that also is his Korean. So when I'm looking at this guy, I'm seeing a combat vet. I'm seeing somebody who really, really was in combat. He saw some things. And he was proud of what he did.

#### IV. Decoding the Uniform: Qualifications and Branch

Now, the next thing that he has that you want to pay attention to is his jump wings. Your jump wings mean that he's parachute qualified. They didn't have gliders after World War II. Gliders didn't prove very workable in World War II, so they got rid of them. They changed all the glider units to airborne units. So he's an airborne guy. That means that he qualified. He went through three weeks of intensive training at jump school at some point, and he earned his wings.

The flash behind it, every airborne unit, and this is still true today, you don't see much in the infantry guys doing it, but in the airborne guys, they always have a flash behind their deal. It'll always be significant of where they're at. This one he's got on here is the headquarters company for the 11th Airborne. The 506th that you all know, Band of Brothers, they had a red, white, and blue flash. If it's a red flash, that usually means he's an artillery unit. Everybody had their own flash. That's true today. You look at a Special Forces guy or look at an airborne guy, and he'll have the flash behind his wings, usually, that tells you where he's at.

His other one here is his rifle qualification. That came in three classes. This was an expert here. So this guy was an expert with his weapon. The next one down, if you didn't qualify expert, was a sharpshooter. And then the one after that was a marksman. Nobody wanted a marksman. Everybody wanted to get the first one, if you could, because it signified that you were an expert. I have seen guys that, if you look down here underneath, it's got a little plate attached to it that says rifle. I've seen guys that had seven or eight of those. They got expert with a rifle. They got expert with a pistol. They got expert with a bazooka. They got expert with whatever. They just added to it because of what they were expert in. When you got the last one, that was usually, again, military's got its own word, that was its own terms. That was usually your bolo badge. In other words, you couldn't hit, as they used to say in the military, you couldn't hit your grandmother in the rear end with a base fiddle. That's usually how that goes along. Their talk, not mine, but anyway. I could put that into the Greek, if you'd like, if I had help you out.

Then of course, so this one over here is the, he has his US over here, so you know he's in the US Army. Then over here will be the branch that he's in. If he's got cross rifles, that means he's infantry. On this one, it's kind of a neat deal because he's got a 187 above it. Sometimes you see that, not usually you do, but he would show you he was a 187. If he was in the Signal Corps, he'd have two flags. If he was in the Medical Corps, he'd have that snake on a pole. If he was in Tank Corps, it'd be a tank. So that would tell you also. When you see a guy, you have to be able to read a guy. There are some great books out of it. One of the books that I was going to bring today, and I forgot it, was called \*Finding Your Father's War\*. It's one of the greatest books that you'll find that interprets everything for you, gives you the timeframe and everything.

The last thing I wanted to say about this guy before we get into our study in the Bible is he's got the Presidential Unit Citation. That's a unit award. That was not given to individuals directly, but the 11th Airborne during World War II was recognized by the President in some major conflict that they did. So they got awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. Here again, he's got an oak leaf on it that means he got two. I would say from understanding the European, Japanese theater or the Pacific theater, he probably got one of those for the raid on the Philippines when they took back the Philippines and they jumped into the Philippines.

When you see that now, any soldier, a Marine may not have all of the stuff on his sleeve, but these are all the same. So when an Air Force guy, he may not have, he'll have the collar tabs on it for Air Force, but he may not have the shoulder, but these will all be the same. Any special things that he has will be on his uniform. So when you meet a guy or you look at a guy, you can immediately, at least I can, anyhow, I can pretty much size up where he's been and what he's done. That's why it's important, if we're going to recognize these guys on Memorial Day, it's more than just putting a flag on your front porch. It's understanding that a guy like this, now I'm for anybody. You take a guy that gives up three or four years of his life no matter what he does, if he serves his country honorably, then that's important to me because it's a thing where that is a real sacrifice that people make. But when I see a guy like this, I know a guy like this, he really got into it and he served with distinction in a combat unit, not only in World War II, but also in Korea. So when you see somebody like this, and of course the uniforms are different now. This is a World War II slash into Korea, and they changed to the greens then in about, oh, I don't know,

'65, '64 maybe, and then they went to the ones that we have today. It's been an evolving process as they go through that. But this is what you would look at and this is how you would read him. And you could see where he's been and what he's done.

## V. The Christian as a Soldier

Now with that thought in mind, let me bring you over here back to the Bible, and I'll leave Sergeant Rock over here where you can take a look at him later. Now with that understanding of what we went through, and I know, I mean, I started this, probably some people say, "Well, how is Bob ever going to tie this into the Bible?" Well, I'll just make it up and you won't know the difference anyhow, it's okay. No, that's not true. But with that understanding of being able to read a soldier, I want you to turn over to the book of Joshua chapter 12. You might not think there's a similarity in what I just showed you to what I'm about to show you, but I guarantee you when I'm done with this message, you probably will. I want to show you something that I came across years ago when I was systematically going through the books of the Bible and what I found in the great book of Joshua.

Now it goes without saying, and we sang the songs today, and it's Memorial Day, and I don't want to recognize all of our brave men and women who were soldiers without us missing the fact that as Christians, we're supposed to be soldiers.

*Hebrews 2:10*

*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

I know that thinking about being a Christian soldier is kind of a corny idea today. That's because Christians are corny today. They've lost the sense of what they really should be.

*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.*

*2 Timothy 2:3*

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

It goes on to talk about in Ephesians chapter six, which we'll get to a little bit later on, that my weapon is my sword, is the word of God.

*Ephesians 6:17*

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

My job as a soldier with that weapon to do the work for God is to draw blood with that sword.

*Jeremiah 48:10*

*Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.*

Now we're not to kill people, but you know what? We are to take the word of God and we are to cut them to the place, spiritually speaking, that they see that the blood of Christ was shed for them on the cross, that they might have the hope of eternal life. The Bible says when we don't do that, we're cursed. So we as God's people are in a warfare, and the Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter eight, that there's no discharge from that war.

*Ecclesiastes 8:8*

*There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.*

Now I'm a pastor, and I run into pastors all the time. In fact, I ran into a couple this last couple of weeks. One guy told me that there were some things that needed to change in his church, and that he knows that they need to change, but he's not going to be willing to try to change because he says, "I'm 65 years old, and in two years I'm going to retire, and I couldn't get all that done in two years." Yet I have to tell you, I don't get that. How do you miss Ecclesiastes 8 when it tells us that there's no discharge from this war?

Now, if you work for Ford or IBM or GM or you work for some corporation someplace, there's going to be a time probably when your retirement comes up. But I'm telling you right now, if you're a pastor, there's no extra date on your end. There's no retirement for you. You go till you can't go anymore, and then you go a little farther, and then you do whatever you have to do. I'm 70 years old, I'm going to be 71 here in a couple of weeks, size 15 and a half, 33. I'm telling you, I have no plans to retire. In fact, when I hit 65, I didn't retire, I refired. I don't understand these guys.

You take Caleb. Caleb is one of my favorite guys in the Bible in Joshua. You realize that the last time you read about Caleb, he had just gotten his inheritance, and he's 85 years old. He's going up that mountain that is filled with giants. He's got a sword in his hand and a glimmer in his eye, and he wants his mountain. Yet we get to be 65, 66, 67, and we think it's time to quit. No, probably you should have quit when you were 20 or 21. But there's no retirement if you're in the ministry. You're in for the duration. You go till you can't go anymore. You go till you can't do it anymore.

A guy gets to the point when he's 60 or 70, if he's done what he's supposed to do and he's done with God and the Word of God, he's now probably at the most valuable time in his life. You may not be able to go out and climb tall buildings in a single bound or jump speeding bullets, but you have the value of what you have learned to take you young guys and gals and give it to you. That's where it's time to replace yourself in the people God's given you. Not go down to Florida in a dinosaur graveyard someplace and go home to the Lord on a golf course. Are you kidding me? But that's where we're at today.

I joined God's army in 1972. I had just gotten out of the military. I'm an Army guy too. I go with the thing that I told one of the guys this morning, "You can get the guy out of the Army, but you never get the Army out of the guy." The things that I learned in the military, I've carried with me all through life. I found the great parallel, so they fit into me being a Christian soldier.

I remember my dad died in 1972, and that was really the key that God used in my life that I wasn't where I needed to be. I got home from the Army, and I went and got right with God and got saved. I remember that I was downtown in Canton, and there was a recruiter office there. I just wandered in to get a smell of the place and look at the posters, you know how it is. All these guys jumping out of airplanes, and all these guys doing this and doing that, and all these guys running across the field from behind, all looked the same with green uniforms and green helmets and carrying rifles. I'm looking at that, and the recruiter comes over. He says to me, "Hey, I can get you signed up." He said, "You want to join?" I said, "Well, I just started, I just got out." I said, "I just..." He said, "Well, I can get you back in, get your grade back and everything." He said, "What do you think about that?" I thought for a minute, and I looked at him and I said, "No, sir, I can't do that, Sarge." He says, "Why not?" I said, "Because I've joined God's army now." From that day forth, I never got out of God's army. From that day forth, it meant something to me to be a soldier.

When it comes to the church, understanding the church, there are two aspects to it that are completely lost today. That is the idea of the church militant and that is the idea of the church triumphant. Nobody even understands what that means. The church militant is the church, you and me, in this world fighting the fight for the Lord Jesus Christ, that we take our stand in a military format, spiritually speaking. Everything in it there is a picture of what a military should be. Then the church triumphant is the glory that we're going to experience when God comes down and pulls us out of this thing and we all go home to be with Him in heaven. That concept is lost today. There's no church militant today.

The old songs in our hymnals, we sang them this morning, you know, "Onward Christian Soldiers," "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," "Hold the Fort for I Am Coming," "Fight the Good Fight," "A Flag to Follow," "Sound the Battle Cry," "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" "I Must Fight If I Would Win," "Increase Lord My Faith," "I'll Bear the Toil and Endure the Pain Supported by His Word." I mean, those are great songs, but they're gone today. Now you go to the church, and the song service is like a Super Bowl halftime show. Dancing girls, dancing guys, break dancers, and some music is out of the pit of hell with light things and smoke coming up under the deal. I guess that's probably a prophecy of things to come. But anyway, it's just the way it is. There are a lot of great songs of our faith when it meant something to be a soldier for Christ. The church militant today has been replaced with a church of feminine.

I understand some of you guys here today that maybe you don't go to church on a regular basis, and you think church is for old ladies and kids. I get that, man, because I apologize, but Christianity, most pastors, most churches will leave a bad taste in your mouth of what Christianity really is. I apologize for that, but I can't fix them. If I would, I'd napalm them all in the morning, but I can't do that.

## VI. Joshua 12: A Record of Battles

Joshua chapter 12. I guess there are no other two men in all of the Bible that are an illustration of our spiritual warfare more than Joshua and Caleb. Joshua, boy, you ought to read Joshua 23 and 24, the last things he says as a military leader. And then Caleb, are you kidding me? Joshua chapter 14, 85, up that mountain he goes.

So allow me to read for you the first eight verses here in Joshua chapter 12. Then we'll look at some things. I want to show you some things that I learned.

*Joshua 12:1-8*

*Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east:*

*2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon;*

*3 And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea on the east, the way to Bethjeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdothpisgah:*

*4 And the coast of Og king of Bashan, which was of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei,*

*5 And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.*

*6 Them did Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.*

*7 And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions;*

*8 In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and the Klingons and all the rest of them that wiped out in Star Wars.*

Now, this is an incredible passage here. Let me say this. You have in this chapter, and I didn't go through the whole thing, but it's a summary. It's a summary of the battles that they have fought when they came into the land. I don't know if you know this or not, but when they got up to the land pretty quickly after the next, Egypt, they sent the spies over. Only two men of those spies went over and checked it out and came back. The rest of them were afraid. Joshua and Caleb

were the two guys that went over. So now this is a record of the battles when they finally go in on both sides of Jordan. Verses one through six, if you like this kind of information, is the battles on the east side. Verses seven through 24 is the battles on the west side of Jordan.

In this chapter, along with all the other things in the Bible that you've got here, this is considered by guys who read the Bible or teach the Bible as a non-essential passage. In fact, I've heard guys say that this is one of the boring places in the Bible. I don't think the Bible's boring, but there's not a lot here. You can't compare this to Romans chapter eight, Romans chapter seven. You can't compare this to actually the chapter 12. This is just a boring chapter that is just recapping what we already know has been done.

Now let me just say this to you. This is a lesson you need to learn when it comes to your Bible. I have learned that chapters like this that most people think are boring are probably the most important spiritual value things that you're ever going to learn in your Bible. Sometimes God hides it underneath the surface and your attitude of heart when you come to a chapter. I know if you're reading your Bible, this is the chapter that you're going to start reading six lines at a time so you can get through it because you think it doesn't have anything there. I'm going to tell you, what follows here is a list of the nations and the kings that they fought and utterly destroyed. When you put it all together, they fought three major campaigns. Three major campaigns. When you go down through the rest of the chapter in verses nine through 24, he actually lists the kings and the nations that they destroyed. When you count them up, there's 31. 31 nations that they defeated. 31 kings that were in their land that God gave them. They go in and they wipe them out. They go in and they take that land from them. Three major campaigns, east and west side of Jordan. 31 kings, 31 nations.

Just as a side note here, these nations back here that you would read about in this chapter and other places in the Bible, these nations here are on the New Testament side from the cross on and certainly today. These are the same nations that are surrounding the nation of Israel today. They've changed geographical location. They've changed names. They have changed their religion. But these will be the Egyptians, the Iraqi, the Iranian. This will be the Palestinians. This will be Hamas. This will be Al-Qaeda. This will be the Jordanians. This will be all of the nations that are surrounding Israel today at the second coming of Christ to try to keep them from staying in the land. You know, the nation of Israel was out of the land for almost 3,000 years till 1948 when it came back in. That's another lesson.

Let me just say this to you. The 400 years, the devil knew what the promised land was. It's called the promised land because that's the land that God promised Abraham, and it had all the promises of God that He was going to give them. It's Jerusalem and the land grant that was given to Abraham. That land grant runs from Egypt over to Baghdad and all the way up to Mount Ararat. I mean, it's like 1,600 miles in a triangle. That's all Israel. Israel just has a thumbnail of that now. She doesn't even have all of Jerusalem. The very place that Christ is coming back on the Dome of the Rock is now in Muslim control. They don't even have it. That's all going to change at some point in time and hopefully very quickly.

But it's a thing where when they're down in Egypt for 430 years and God is building them to be a strong nation. Let me tell you what the devil's doing. He's moving all these nations into the land that God promised them and fortifying it. He's going to do everything he can to keep God's people from getting the victory where God wants them to go.

Now let me just say this to you. Inspirationally, these 31 kings, they represent whatever the devil's throwing at you in your life to keep you from having the victory of Jesus Christ in your life today. They want to be the king of your world instead of the Lord Jesus Christ being the king of your world. In your spiritual warfare, in your spiritual world to be a soldier for Jesus Christ, he has stacked the deck against you. He's brought in everything that wants to have preeminence in your life and be in charge of your life and be the king of your life outside the Lord Jesus Christ, just like back in the Old Testament. You see how it works physically back there in the Old Testament, but spiritually for us? This is the warfare that we face. Their warfare was a literal warfare to wipe out those nations. Your warfare and my warfare is a warfare to keep Jesus Christ king of your life. Boy, that's a battle sometimes, isn't it?

Now, when you put this chapter into a context of the book of Joshua, and I did this as I was systematically coming through it, you find that now that the battle is over, and they are going to receive now their inheritance. Now stay with me here. Now that the battles are over, and they're going to receive their inheritances, and they get the inheritance from chapter 13 to the end of the chapter. Doctrinally, we know that that's a picture of Israel getting the millennial reign of Christ and their inheritance. They're getting it here now physically, but that's a picture of what they're going to get when the Lord comes back. I understand this doctrinally, I get it. But when you look at it from a practical application for you and for me, what do we learn by this? What is God showing us in this absolutely boring chapter? You have a great picture of something that I believe that we all need to understand and get a better hold of: the warfare of who will be the king of our lives.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for today. Thank you for the veterans that are here. Thank you, Father, for the folks that have showed up today. We pray, Father, that we all can leave today on Memorial Day, not just today, on Memorial Day, not just thanking those who gave their lives or gave the sacrifice or gave time of their life to protect us and keep us safe, but also, Father, the fact that we have a job to do as soldiers for Jesus Christ. Help us to understand today, to leave here a little better in tune with who you are and what we should be. And we'll thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it, amen.

## VII. God's Record of Our Spiritual Battles

As I said earlier, we are in a warfare. We are told, Timothy was told by Paul, that we endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. But unlike the Old Testament warfare, and I've already told you this, ours is not literal, it's spiritual.

*Ephesians 6:10-11*

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*Ephesians 6:12*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*Ephesians 6:13*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

Then he goes on and he says, "Stand therefore," and talks about the armor. As a soldier, we are told to stand four times. That's our job. Our job is fundamentally to take our stand. Out of the message today and learning how to read a soldier and read his uniform on Memorial Day, I want to give you basically two things that I want to talk about for us today on Memorial Day. Because when I read chapter 12, and I see what God is doing in the context of Israel, and I can make the application to me because they were in a warfare physically, but I'm in one spiritually. There are some things here that I want to talk to you about before we go to the Judgment Seat of Christ and claim our inheritance.

The first thing I want you to see and understand from this chapter, and most guys would just say, "Yeah, just blow through that, read through it. It's just a recap." I'll tell you what, when you put it into context, I'm going to tell you the first thing you better understand: God's keeping a record of the battles that you have fought in. Don't you get this idea you're just going to slip through with the Judgment Seat of Christ? God right now, in your life, and in my life, He's keeping a record of the combat battles that you have fought in for Him. And you better get it.

You know, when I first got right with God, when I got out of the military and I got my life right, I went to camp. This was my first introduction to Dr. Peter S. Ruckman, who in World War II was a second lieutenant and trained troops, and he never lost his military edge either. One night at camp, and I had just gotten right with God, and I was just in awe of what was going on around me. He preached a message one night on the whole armor of God out of Ephesians chapter six. He went down through everything, and he said this, and I never forgot this. He stopped, you know, he used to draw when he was doing his stuff, and he stopped and he turned around and he took his glasses off and he said to the young guys and the guys out there in the audience, there's about 400 people there. He said, "Let me tell you something, kids. If you ever shell out this world and you don't compromise with this world and you get in that book and you make the decision you're going to serve the Lord and you're going to take your stand for Him as it tells you four times," he says, "I want you to know right now, the battles that you're going to get in are going to make all the battles of life look like kids shooting marbles." He said, "I'm not kidding you." He says, "The battle of the Revolutionary War, the battle of Gettysburg, the little Bull Run, the battle of, you know, World War I, the Château-Thierry and the battle of the Argonne Forest and Guadalcanal and Okinawa and Iwo Jima," and he went through the whole list of them. He says, "The battle you're going to get into as a soldier for Jesus Christ in this warfare is going to make those things pale in comparison."

I have to be honest with you, just a guy getting out of the military, I didn't understand that. I wasn't in the ministry yet. I was just getting my feet on the ground. I didn't understand what he was saying. But let me say after 50 years in this fight, I know exactly what he's saying now. I'm going to tell you something. If you ever decide to take your stand, if you ever decide that you're not going to shell out into the world and you're going to be a soldier for Jesus Christ, you're going to get into some combat. You're going to get into some things that make all the physical things of war just like nothing at all. That's saying a lot because they were horrendous times. I'm not downplaying at all. I'm upplaying the fact that you decide you're going to take your stand for God, you're going to get it.

You got these goofy little people out there that you know how these little dial-up prayers where you dial this number when this recording comes on and says, "This is the day the Lord hath made. You should be glad and rejoice." That's supposed to get you through the day. You know what, if I had one of those things, I heard a while back they had when the atheist put one out where you called the number and nobody ever answered. But if I had one of those things, I'd be honest about it. You'd dial that number and you'd say, "Hey, this is the day the Lord hath made and you're going to get it in the neck," because you will. You will. I'm telling you something, the first thing you better learn is God's keeping a record of the battles that you and I have been in.

I'll tell you the second thing based on what I'm reading here, because before they get their inheritance, he stops and gives a summary of what they have fought. I'm telling you the second thing, when you stand before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you better have some combat ribbons on your uniform. I hate that moment, but too, the war of the believer is unknown today.

I was thinking this week as I was pulling this together and thinking about the church militant, and that's taking our stand. Here's a guy back in church history by the name of Savonarola. He preached the salvation of Christ and took on the whole bottle of wax. They tried to buy him out, and the Pope called him in before them and said, "Look, I'll give you a red hat of a cardinal." He said, "I'll make you a cardinal and give you the red hat, that's what they all wear, if you just shut up and quit this preaching." You know what he said? He said, "I don't want your red hat." He said, "I'll take a red hat of blood." They arrested him, and for almost a year, they tortured him unbelievably, trying to get him to recant on Jesus Christ. Finally, when he would not recant, they were going to execute him and burn him at the stake. They put him up there on that pole and put all the wood around him, and they come down to light that thing, and the Catholic priest or archbishop came up and said to him, "Today, Savonarola, we are going to separate you from the church militant and the church triumphant." You know the last thing that old bird said to those guys? He says, "You may separate me from the church militant, but you'll never separate me from the church triumphant. Light them up, boys, light them up." Now that's a soldier. I wonder how that compares with COVID-19. "No, I'm not fighting it." That was a terrible disease. "I'm not fighting it." Somebody says, "What's the cure?" Bombing Wuhan, China. That's the cure. Take out a lab over there. You say it didn't come from a lab. No, it came from a monkey, I guess. I get it, I get that. You know what? Then bomb out the wet markets. They eat dogs. Did you ever see those things? They got little puppies they're raising, do they eat them? Now if I was president, I'd bomb you out just on that. Eating them little puppies, raising them up so you can

buy a puppy, take it home and kill it and skin it and then eat it for dinner. Are you kidding me? Well, I'd bomb you right off the planet after I get all the puppies out. That's another sermon. I'll preach that next week. I'm telling you.

There's something else I want you to see here. Boy, you better get this one. Christianity today, all of us, we have been sold a bill of goods. I really believe that the idea of the church militant, the idea of the battles we're supposed to be in, the ideas of fighting the war, and Him stopping there and going through all of those conflicts, me taking the time to show you how to read a combat soldier because you ought to be a combat soldier, and how God stopped that thing and said, "Let's review the battles you have been in." Before you get your inheritance, He's going to stop and look at the battles you were in. Boy, you better stand there with your attention with your chest out in combat ribbons. Combat ribbons, got any?

## VIII. Your Spiritual Combat Ribbons

Now I'll tell you the second idea. We got some really whacked out ideas about getting an inheritance. We think that if you go to church, if you read your Bible, if you're a soul winner, if you're a prayer warrior for God, if you do all those nice little things that preachers get on you about for not doing and you decide you're going to do those things, or you show up for church, you show up for Bible study, show up for Bible Institute, you go around talking about getting people saved and how you want to win people saved, you even wear your little T-shirt that says, you know, Jesus. I'm all for it, I think they're great. I had a jacket one time that I put together that I got at some place, doesn't fit anymore because when I became a man, I grew out of those days. But anyway, it had a three on the back where they said the night fighters, out of Revelation chapter three, fighting in the night. So I'm all for those things. But we like to display ourselves. I'm not fighting it, it's okay. I mean, it's like amen and don't amen it louder than you live it. I mean, it's just that simple.

I tell God's people all the time, you know, you think because you come to church you're going to get an inheritance because of that, because you're a soul winner, you're going to get an inheritance because you read your Bible through in a year, you're going to get an inheritance for that, because you pray you're going to get an inheritance. You need to wake up, man. Turn over to Luke chapter 17. May I bust your bubble this morning? Oh, this whole idea of Christianity and the Judgment Seat of Christ, you get your inheritance, all based on a nice little Christian things you do. Really? Oh boy, Joshua chapter 12 sure puts a dent in your armor.

Look at Luke chapter 17. Now he comes down here in the first 10 verses and he talks about everything everybody's doing. We don't have to mess with all that. I want to make my point in verses nine and 10. Here's what he says.

*Luke 17:9-10*

*Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.*

*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

You don't get rewards for doing what you're supposed to do of being a Christian. You don't get an inheritance for coming to church. You don't get an inheritance for being a soul winner. You don't get an inheritance for all the things you do. You better find out in the Christian life what you do get an inheritance for. It's over and above. The things that you're supposed to do, you don't get credit for that. You're supposed to do that. It's like when I was a kid growing up, my mom and dad never did this because they never had any money. But all the kids in the neighborhood, if they got straight A's, they got money for it. But we didn't get anything. I mean, we didn't have anything. But I thought to myself years later, there you are, rewarding somebody for doing what they're supposed to do. Of course, you have to understand, they were straight A students and I was a straight C and D student, so I had a little attitude toward them. But you know what? The bottom line is you don't get rewarded for the things you're supposed to do as a Christian. Are you kidding me? I mean, He died for you. He was a sacrifice for you. That's all you need to know. You don't get any rewards for that. You have to go over and above that. You know what the tragedy is? God's people don't even know what that is.

So let's take a moment. Memorial Day. Lots of war movies on. It gets you out of here early because there are four really good ones coming on this afternoon. Of course, with a guy like me, I've got on my thing where I can just record them. So I may stay here a while. So let's take a moment and look at your battle record. The warfare that we have been in. Let's talk about for a moment the combat ribbons that should be on your chest at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I know, I know, I know. You're so spiritual. "Well, you're not going to have real combat." Oh, I know that, I know that. But let's say that you did. Because we know he's stopping before they got their inheritance and he's looking at the battles. I'm just trying to make a parallel between a real combat guy and where most of God's people are at.

Let's start with the hash marks. Now he doesn't have one here, but if he did, he'd have a bar there that shows you how long it was. I've seen some guys that they get one for every four years. I've seen some guys have them all the way down their sleeve. I've seen many a 30-year man with all the hash marks on. A guy who'd been in the military 30 years, but he's got no combat ribbons. You see, you get a good conduct medal, but you have no combat ribbons. I've known God's people all my life who were saved 10, 15, 20, 30 years and have never been, got even close to the real battlefield. Always playing it safe.

You know, in the military, you have what we call lifers. Military's got its own terminology. They're called lifers. A lifer's a guy who's in for life, 20, 30 years. I've watched these guys and known these guys when I was in, and I watched these guys that are just, they get to the point where they get 20 years in or 15 years in or 18 years in, maybe they're going for 20 or they're going for 30 and they get 24. What they do is they just coast. They don't train anymore. They know that their retirement is right around the corner, and they just, they just coast. They don't do PT anymore. They don't go to the training classes. They don't show up at the rifle range. They've got now some stripes on them that they can get around those things, and they just coast into their retirement. Boy, I've seen a lot of God's people like that. I've had people in my own ministry. I've had people in my own ministry that were saved for 10, 15, 20, 30 years, and because you got that much time in, you're just coasting. You're just waiting for the Lord to come back. You're just

coasting. Back in the day, we used to call guys like that in the rear with the gear. I can't tell you what they used to have in the grass, but in the rear with the gear. I have a lot of things I can't say. You military guys can fill in the blanks for me. You know what I'm talking about. I even have a couple of songs. Every time you guys sing happy birthday to somebody, the military version of that goes through my mind, which I could never say in public. But it's pretty neat. There's a great one about that. There's a great one about we kissed the general's daughter and drank the colonel's beer, but I can't get into that one either. But you look at those things and I ask you, you've been saved five, 10, what, 15, 20 years, 30 years? No combat ribbons.

Then I'll ask you this. I mean, did you ever get your CIB? Called the most dangerous decoration. In World War II it was 60 days under intense combat. It was the pride of an infantryman. You ask yourself compared to your inheritance, to Joshua chapter 12, how much of your life has been under fire? You know, some of God's people go through their whole life. Nobody ever gets mad at them about anything you believe about the Bible. Unbelievable.

You know, today in the military, and I'm not knocking it because I've had all the respect in the world, but if you go to Iraq or you go to, you know, over the Middle East, you have a, what, a year's tour and then you come back. It was that way in Vietnam. But most people think that's a long time, and I'm sure it is if you get into some bad situation. But you know, in World War II, they didn't have a minimum time. Some of those guys left and were away from home for four or five years. You look at some of those infantry units in that book that I told you about, some of those units had 500 days of combat. Some of them like the 82nd Airborne had 700 days of combat. Some of them had 800 days of combat. I'm telling you, there's no discharge from that war. Your people, you know, you didn't get out. You had a point system in World War II. You had to get 86 points before you could rotate out and go home. Nobody got 86 points. You stayed in World War II. You either got wounded or you got killed. There was no getting out. I've often looked at that and I thought to myself, you know what, without a doubt, as far as I'm concerned, that age, that era of America was the greatest generation. Those men, most of them are dying now, 1,200 a day are dying. I've talked to many of them. I've talked to many of them. I've been around them, boy, and I'll tell you there's something special. But have you got your CIB? Is that going to be on your uniform when you stand before the captain of your salvation?

How about this one? Let me ask you this one. What was your weapons qualification? Your weapon, the Word of God. Are you an expert? Are you a sharpshooter? Or are you the guy that couldn't hit your grandmother in the rear end with a base fiddle when it comes to your Bible? Now your weapon is everything. You guys in the Marine Corps probably know this. I know we said it in AIT. You'd go to bed at night. You'd say, "This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine. Without my rifle, I am nothing. Without me, my rifle is nothing. Me and my rifle are one." I need to go to sleep.

There was no D.I. on this planet that understood that that came out of 2 Samuel chapter 23. Remember the guy that fought, one guy killed 600 men and he fought them with a sword, and he was so, so into that battle that when the battle was over, the sword had become one with his hand, the muscles had cramped around it and he couldn't drop the sword. That's the way you ought to be with your weapon. That Bible ought to become part of your life.

Most of you guys were in the Army. Most of you guys went to AIT. Certainly you guys were in the Marine Corps. I don't know how many times when you were in AIT in basic or whatever, you'd get to sleep about nine o'clock at night. You got up at 4:30. And on about one o'clock in the morning, boy, he'd kick a garbage can down the middle of the bay, squad bay, and turn the lights on and everybody out of the rack. Back then we had M14s. A little later on we had M16s, but we had M14s at the time, which is a makeover M1 Garand. We'd get our rifles out of the rack, and he'd walk, the barracks was probably twice as long as this. He'd walk down the end of the barrack, and your eyes are getting all used to the light and everything. He'd walk down through that thing, and then he'd get down to the other end and he'd turn the lights out and everything's blank and he'd say, "Tear down." You tore your rifle down when you couldn't see in the dark. Then he'd walk back at that thing, and all you'd hear was click, click, click, click, click, boy, you're only a spring going out here. Duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh. By the time he got to the end, it had better be quiet. He'd turn the light back on, walk up and down, looking at all those parts. Everybody had to hold up a part and name that part. Stock group, bolt group, trigger housing group, forward assist group, forward assist spring. Nobody better say the same thing. Then he'd walk down to that thing, and your eyes were adjusted now, and then he'd turn those lights back on and they'd say, "Put them back together." Boy, hear it again, you can't see nothing. You're trying to get the follower in and the bolt thing in and get the thing in and get the thing turned around here and get the stock group in and put the thing in there and it better be done. Then you didn't fudge on it because if it ain't pulled back together, it won't go click when you pull the trigger. It'll go, "Kalabonza, bubble old Bob," but it won't go click. So he walks down here and he turns the lights on and then he says, "Watch down and click, click, click, click, click, click, click, click, click, click, click, click." No click.

Now why do they do stupid stuff like that? I'll tell you why. Because you get out there in the middle of the night, someplace, boy, and they're coming over the north wall and your gun jams and you get dark, you ain't going to say, "Well, hold up, boys, we need to get a flashlight over here or I'll fix my weapon." You're fixing it in the dark. Let me ask you a question. How good are you with that sword of the Spirit? Can you lay out Matthew, Acts, and Hebrews? Do you have a handle on that, can you take them apart? Can you take your Bible apart from the Old Testament to the New Testament? The Bible says there are seven resurrections. Can you explain them? Can you tear them down? Your Bible has three applications, just like your rifle had three major groupings, stock group, barrel group, and receiver group. Can you tear them down? Can you put it back together? There are 11 dispensations in the Bible. Can you break them down? Can you put them back together? In the nighttime, church age. Seven resurrections, do you know what they are? Oh, come on, man, I mean, when you get there and you go back and reflect your battle time, what's your weapon qualification going to be? I don't know about you, but this is my Bible. There are many like it, but this one is mine. Without me, my Bible is nothing. Without the Bible, I am nothing. Me and my Bible are one, amen? Well, what do you know about it today? What's your weapons qualification? I'm telling you, man, there's a day coming. Seven periods of church history, can you lay it out? Somebody threw you a Bible. Oh, I know, you're a great soul winner and you just love this and you shoot off so much gas about how, come on, let's get down when the rubber meets the road. You've been saved 20, 30, 40 years. You're still in the rear with the gear. You're a wannabe. You just talk about a lot. But somebody throws you a rifle, you can fix it.

Saves you a Bible, you couldn't take it apart. As Mel used to say, sounds like a turkey farm day after Thanksgiving.

How about your campaign ribbons? Our campaign is United States of America. How many real battle stars will you have in that day? I'm not talking about because of the dumb things we all did.

*Hebrews 13:12-13*

*Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.*

*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*

You know what? We have to take it to the enemy. We have to take the battle outside. We can't just stay home where it's safe. We can't pretend and orchestrate the circumstances and pretend because you go to church or you read your Bible or you talk about soul winning, that you're really a soldier. What really makes a soldier is the combat ribbons, the qualifications. Bearing his reproach like He did for you. I wonder sometimes how God's people even look at themselves in the mirror in the morning. Maybe they've just seared their conscience, I don't know.

You know when David got into trouble? You know when it all started? You know what the devil did to mess him up and David caused his own problem by taking the wrong direction? You know what it was? The answer's found in 2 Samuel chapter 11, verse one.

*2 Samuel 11:1*

*And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.*

You know what that message is about? David's fatal furlough. He got out of the battle. When he stayed home, you know who the devil popped in? Bathsheba. We can't afford to get out of the battle. There can't ever be a day when we stay home from it. Because when we do, the devil will have something else for you, and the very day we get out of the battle is the day that you're headed for trouble. That's masterly obvious, that's why many of God's people are in the mess they're in.

Now the fifth thing, if you're in your jump wings, the 82nd Airborne, you know, is that they have the rapid deployment that in 24 hours or 48 hours, they can be anywhere in the world. Jump school is three weeks of the most intense training that you'll ever want to have in your life. You go to that after basic and after AIT or someplace in between there, then they send you off to jump school. You go to Fort Benning, Fort Bragg or wherever it may be. It's the most intense time you'll ever want to go to in your life, you run everywhere. You do calisthenics, they got telephone poles that weigh 1,200 pounds, long telephone poles. They'll put 20 guys underneath that telephone pole and you'll do setups pulling that telephone pole up. I mean, it's incredible stuff. But they do that so they can drop you any place, anytime, anywhere to get the job done.

There's a special branch in the Airborne called the Pathfinders. Those guys were the elite of the elite, and what they did before an invasion went in, these guys by themselves were dropped into enemy territory, hid for a day to light the drop zones that when their main paratroopers came over, that they would find a place to land. In other words, they went in first to light the way for others. Any of you ever do that? Any of you ever go into a dark place that you can light the world for somebody else, who's going to land?

In World War II, in Normandy, June the 6th, 1944, the two main airborne groups that jumped behind the enemy lines on the day before Normandy was the 101st, the 82nd. Close to 16,000 paratroopers jumped in behind the lines in enemy territory, and their job was to secure the roads and the town, places like Carentan. The highways that cut off the Germans from bringing reinforcements in when they landed on the beach. They all had drop zones that were in specific areas relative to where their objectives were. Well, it was a disaster. The C-47s that were carrying them over got blown out of the sky. Many of the guys never got out of the plane. Many of them, the guys who were flying the planes, were so fearful of getting hit and blown up that they increased their speed. Now they were supposed to jump out of a plane at about 75 miles an hour, but to get out of the flak, those pilots pushed the throttles forward and were doing 100, 120 miles an hour when they gave those guys the green lights. Many of those guys, when they went out of that plane, lost their weapons, they lost their bags, they lost everything, and they were scattered everywhere. There wasn't one airborne group that was within five, six, 10 miles of his drop zone where he was supposed to be. It would have been a disaster except for one thing. The airborne on the next day got every objective they were supposed to get and did everything they were supposed to do. Why? Their officers were scattered. Many of the guys didn't see each other for three or four weeks. They were scattered everywhere. How did they get it done? Because the airborne were trained differently. They were trained to act as independents. They were trained that they didn't have to have an officer to get the job done. They were trained with the intensity to get the job done without anybody telling them what to do. The Germans, on the other hand, couldn't respond because they had to wait for orders because they weren't allowed to think on their own. When you cut their communication line, you got them.

That's what I want with my people. I want God to be able to drop you any place in this city, any place in this country. I want you to find yourself in situations where you can't get ahold of me or no, and you have the expertise because of how you've been trained that you get the job done. You know what to do. You don't need somebody showing you how to do it. Many of you do that already. I listen to you guys. You guys deal with people, and you call me up and say, "Hey, I just dealt with so and so," and I say to myself, "That's exactly what I did." You've learned. You've got to learn to act independently when you're thrown into a situation that you don't have anybody there to help you. You got to do it yourself. You may have buddies that you're friends with, that you're sitting with today, that are your friends that you hang out with, but you know what? God may throw you in the mix with somebody you don't know, and you've got to learn to work together for the common cause, for the mission, to get it done. Foreign today. But I'm telling you, personal initiative. Personal initiative for you to do everything that God's called you to do, and everything that God wants you to do.

Well, let's talk about the medals of valor. Congressional Medal of Honor is the first one. Distinguished Service Cross is the second one. Silver Star and a Bronze Star are down the line, which you've seen. These aren't unit citations. You get these by actually displaying bravery in combat. Acts of valor, over and above. Now, if your rewards and inheritance lie anywhere, it'll be within these areas here.

I had the privilege one time of meeting a guy by the name of Bobby Dunlap. He was a captain in the United States Marine Corps, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on Iwo Jima. He lived in Mammoth, Illinois. He's dead now, but I got to meet him and spend an afternoon with him. It was one of the most incredible things that you ever find in your life of what he did. He downplayed it. He said, "Oh, you know," most of them do. But he was on Iwo Jima, and he crawled out about 800 yards from his unit that was getting clobbered. For two days, wounded twice, for two days, he was out there all by himself, day and night, calling artillery in on Japanese positions. Incredible.

I think of Private Johnson, United States Marine Corps in Vietnam. He's in a foxhole with four buddies, and a Viet Cong throws a hand grenade in. He jumps on the hand grenade and absorbs the blast. He dies, and his buddies stay alive. Got the Congressional Medal of Honor for it.

We all know the movie *\*Black Hawk Down\**, or you should, 1993 in Somalia, where they went in to get the warlord, and it all went down to pieces and got ambushed. *\*Black Hawk Down\** is a story about the Black Hawk helicopter. They got a tail rotor shot off and crashed down in the middle of the city, and all of the, we're coming after them. The gunners were dead, the copilot was dead, the pilot was the only one left alive. They can't get to him, because there are hundreds, hundreds, a hundred of Somalis going after him and trying to get him. The pilot's in there with an MP5 holding him off as best he can. The helicopters are circling overhead, and they know that this guy's going to get wiped out. In that helicopter were two Green Berets. Two Green Berets. Gary Gordon and Randy Shughart. They knew that he was going to get overrun. They called back to the base for permission to rope down and establish a perimeter. Are you kidding me? Two guys in a perimeter. They refused, and they kept going at it, and finally the guy said back in the base, "Do you know we can't get to you? You know that." And they said, "We understand. We want to rope in." They roped down, and they held off those guys until they ran out of ammo. Then they killed them both. Then they stripped them naked. They tied them to the back of vehicles and dragged them through the streets. But the guy in the helicopter survived. They both got the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Did you ever put your life on a line like that for Jesus Christ? Did you ever go over and above what you're supposed to do? Or you just always play it safe? Do you just talk about, are you just a wannabe? Just talk about what you like to do. You see, this is where the real medal meets the road of combat. This is where it's really at.

Purple Heart. Bible says that He was wounded for your transgressions. You ever take any wounds for His? See, God's people are famous for just playing it safe. I mean, I know a guy here called me up here a couple weeks ago, and he said, "I really appreciate your preaching." He says, "I want you to know," he says, "I've heard what you said about the COVID-19 and how it's

opened up many opportunities for your churches. I just want to give you a testimony." He says, "I got COVID-19." He says, "And I went into the hospital, and I was in there for three weeks, and I was pretty sick. But," he says, "I was right down the hall from a guy who was worse than I was." He says, "He died. But you know what, before he died, I got to win him to Christ." See, was it worth you getting COVID-19 to win somebody to Christ? Of course not. Of course not. I'm telling you, when you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ and He looks at these battles before they got their inheritance, you better understand some things. I mean, it's just that simple. I mean, I'm telling you, there's a day coming when God passes out Millennial Inheritance that He's going to stop and review the battles of life that you and I have been in. Just like you see this guy, when he stood before his commander, his commander knew how to read everything that he was and he could judge what kind of man he was by the battles he'd been in. Your inheritance is not going to be based on you going to church. Your inheritance is not going to be based on, "Will I read my Bible or I'm a soul winner." It isn't going to be based on, "Well, I pray." It's going to be based on Luke chapter 17. You don't get things for the things you're supposed to do. It better be over and above, and God's people don't even know what that is today. In the rear with the gear.

## IX. Characteristics of a True Soldier

In Ephesians chapter six, you have Paul laying out the whole armor of God based on the first century Roman soldier. I think that's instructive. When I read down through that, I find the seven things that make a real soldier. They're the things that I look for in a man or a woman.

1. A good soldier never questions his orders. The model for that will be Acts chapter eight.
2. He knows who he is.
3. A good soldier, his greatest asset is his self-discipline.
4. A good soldier goes where he's told to go and fights who he's told to fight, and he follows a chain of command. He doesn't get out there and do it on his own. He doesn't go do things here outside his church. He follows the chain of command.
5. A good soldier is totally flexible, adaptable, compatible, and durable. He can get in any situation and he can get the job done, just like many of you.
6. He's an expert with his weapon.
7. He never leaves a buddy behind.
8. He knows that he's expendable, but the mission's not.

I might say in 50 years of fighting the good fight, it's been my honor and my privilege to serve with some of the best men and women who are true heroes in the ministry as far as I'm concerned. Back there in 2 Samuel chapter 23, we have a list of David's mighty men of valor. If you look in my Bible, you'll find my list because I have mighty men of valor in my own life, in my own world. It starts with my family and then works down to people just like you here, sitting here today. Some of you have been with me for 40 years now, some 30, some 20, some 10, some five, and some of you just came in and you're well on your way to get where you need to be.

I understand you lose some along the way, I get that. But I've also learned that that's not always a bad thing because people who, and I've told you before, this church is not for everybody, I don't pretend that it is. I got a mission. If you're looking at somebody to hold hands around a fire in

Kumbaya, you're in the wrong place. I understand that and I don't make any bones about it and I don't have any bad feelings about anybody. I realize that in a combat situation, those kinds of people usually get somebody killed.

I remember when I was in jump school and we were getting ready to make a jump, we had a guy who was halfway in the stick. The stick is the guy that jumped. He was shaking like a leaf and he was breaking down. He didn't think he could do it. He started crying and all this stuff, and the jump master comes down and he says, "What's your problem?" And he says, "I don't think I can do it." He unhooked him off that static line, brought him up, put him at the front door, snapped him on, and he said, "You know what, then you go first. So when you die, you don't take anybody with you," and booted him out that door. You know, sometimes God just needs to boot some people out the door.

## X. Holding the Line, Back to Back

In closing, when I think of you, when I think of Memorial Day, when I think about the battles that we have fought together and we have fought some, when I think of you, my fellow soldiers, my band of brothers, for those who we have shared the same mud and shed the same blood, I think of two stories that I've never forgotten. I read about them years ago, and they're true stories.

You know, if you're an infantryman like this guy was, the worst order you can ever hear is that you have been picked, either your squad or your company or your regiment or your division, to form a rear guard action. There are times when an army will get trapped in a pocket and the only way to have 10,000 men escape is to sacrifice 600 men to hold it while they get out. That's called a rear guard action. That is the most terrible order that can come down. Because you know you're not going to get any help and you know you're now going to be sacrificed for other people so they can get out. So you may be in a pocket someplace and you may spread out thin, but you know that your job is that when they see them coming, going out, they're going to come in there to try to get them and you've got to hold them. You're not going to get any help because you're a sacrifice, the rear guard, 600 men sacrificed so 10,000 can get out.

Boy, I'll tell you what, you get in that thing, man, and it starts coming, you hear the order that comes down that every infantryman doesn't want to hear because he knows, he's scared to death, they're coming over the wire. I mean, the bullets are zipping, people are dying, and you're down to your last couple magazines and they're still coming, and then you hear your NCO over the whole loud of the war and you know things are about to fall apart and you're going to get overrun and then you get that shot of adrenaline because your NCO gets up there and screams, "Hold the line, hold the line!" At that point, you know you're not going anywhere. You're going to stay in place and you're going to fight to the last bullet, to the last man, and you're going to hold the line. I can promise you this before God, this church will hold the line. We're in the last days. We are God's rear guard action. We're holding it off so the last few people can get saved and get into the kingdom of God. There are some of you out there that I know as well as I'm standing there when push comes to shove, we will hold the line together. It may not be all of you, it may not be many of you. It doesn't matter, we'll hold the line.

Then the other story that I heard that was a tragic story, just during the Vietnam War, two young men went into the Marine Corps together on the buddy system, and back in Vietnam, they allowed buddies to go into the Marine Corps and stay together through the whole thing. These two guys were best friends. They played football together, baseball, went to school together, and they went to the Marine Corps together. They got an MOS 11 Bravo. They were going into the infantry. They found themselves in Vietnam. One night, after being there about eight or nine weeks, it really hit the fan. These two guys got separated from everybody else. They couldn't get to them because the Viet Cong had them all, they couldn't get a break to them. They had them on a radio, but they said, "Just sit tight." But they knew that they were going to get nailed. Those guys sat there, our guys in that unit sat there, and out there, three, 400 yards away, they heard a firefight going on. They could tell the difference between an M16 and an AK-47. They heard those M16s going off and those AK-47s going off. After about 30, 40 minutes, it got real quiet. They knew that those two guys had gotten overrun.

The next morning, the Viet Cong pulled back and they went out to find what was left to find their bodies. Hopefully they were still alive. They came into a little clearing. They found those two boys. They had fought to the death. They had fought down to the, neither one of them had one round of ammunition left. But what they did, so they would never chicken out on the other one, they took their cartridge belts and they strapped themselves back to back in that clearing. They died fighting it off together back to back. I'm telling you, the only way this church is going to survive what's coming, the only way you're going to survive as a Christian is back to back. You're going to have to, my back, I'm going to have to have yours. And you're going to have to fight this thing back to back. I can promise you this, in this church, there are still people here, no matter how bad it gets, no matter how rough it gets, how terrible it gets, how conditions are, there'll be some here that will hold the line back to back. That's what it's going to take. We are the rear guard action.

I'm telling you right now, get it out of your mind. There's coming a day, there's coming a day you're going to stand before God. Just like in Joshua chapter 12, before you got into the inheritance chapters, He paused and He reviewed their combat experience, the fight they were in. Mel Sobaka used to tell the story, and Gene, if you're listening to this, you know this is true. He used to tell the story about the football, what he wanted from God. He didn't want medals, he didn't want rewards, he didn't want an inheritance, though he obviously was going to get some. That's not what he was looking for. I guess this speaks to the right attitude of heart. He always cloaked it in the story of a football game that he saw one time, where the game was almost over and they were down by three points. They were down on about the 40-yard line and the quarterback snapped the ball and gave it to the running back. The running back starts to go around the corner there and he's going to get nailed. But one of the guards out of nowhere blocks the one guy, takes him out, and then leaps up and blocks the other guy and takes him out and gets creamed. The end guy runs into the touchdown, and Joe makes the touchdown. The whole crowd goes crazy. The guy who made the touchdown spikes the ball, dancing all around, everybody is holding him, and putting it on their shoulders. Mel said that old guy that threw the blocks is down on his face in the ground. He says he gets up slow. While everybody is cheering about the touchdown, the guy who threw the blocks looks over to the line and the coach is watching him

and the coach goes, "Good blocks." But the coach knew that there'd be no touchdown without the blocks. Mel said, "I don't want the rewards, I don't want the inheritance, I just want to stand there before my Lord and have Him go, 'Good blocks.'" We need to throw the blocks that the Holy Spirit of God can make the touchdown. We don't need to be in the touchdown end zone, we need to throw the blocks so the Holy Spirit of God can do what He needs to do. That's our job. The only way we're going to do that is back to back. The only way we're going to do that is to recognize that there's a battle and we have to hold the line. The way we're going to do that is to realize that you're going to stand before God someday and before you get your inheritance, well, you don't get it. He's going to review the battles.

I don't know about you, but all I want, all I want, I don't want anything either, I don't deserve anything. All I want is when I show up that day and I hold up that sword with all the cuts and bruises and all the nicks in the blade and all of the tarnishing from the warfare so that I can throw that thing on the ground and look up to Him and He says, "Well done, now good and faithful servant." That's all I want. That's all you should want. But the only way we're going to get there, back to back, holding the line. Combat soldier, Memorial Day. The campaigns and the combat ribbons that we get.

Every head bound, every eye closed. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you, thank you for all you do for us.