

Subject: *The Battle for Your Soul*

Scripture: *1 Peter 2:9-11*

As we honor our veterans today we remember the wars that have been fought and the war we now fight against Isis and other terrorist groups. This current war against Islamic terrorists is the longest in our nation's history, and it doesn't look like there is any end in sight. We were reminded just this week of the danger on American soil when a man mowed down some people in New York City. We are in a war against a determined and deadly enemy. The Bible tells us about another kind of war. It is a spiritual battle. It is the battle for your soul.

1. The soldiers in this battle

All Christians are in this battle. We are living on the battlefield. We are behind enemy lines. There is no cease fire in this battle. As long as we are in this body and in this world, we are in this battle. Like Nehemiah and others who worked to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, they held a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other. At the same time they were building and battling. That is a picture of the Christian live. In our text we see the soldiers in this battle are described in eight ways:

- A chosen generation (chosen, enlisted by God)
- A royal priesthood (holy, set apart for God)
- A peculiar people (a special possession of God)
- Called out of spiritual darkness into spiritual light
- The people of God (a special relationship)
- People who have received mercy
- Dearly beloved
- Strangers and pilgrims

2. The enemies in this battle

Believers have three real enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our text only mentions one of these enemies, but we have three. The world is the external foe. The flesh is the internal foe. The devil is the infernal foe. All three enemies are a real and present danger. Here is what the Bible says about our enemies:

- The world – the evil world system that is ungodly and even opposed to God

Before we were saved we lived in harmony with the world system, but when the Lord saved that the world became our enemy.

Ephesians 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*

John 15:19 *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

- The flesh – our selfish desires that are opposed to God and His will; human nature apart from God

Galatians 5:17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

- The devil – our sworn enemy who hates God and His people

1 Peter 5:8-9 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

3. The stakes in this battle

It is a battle for the soul. The stakes could not be higher.

- The soul is the inner part of you – the inner being
- The soul is the immortal part of you

Matthew 10:28 *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

- The soul is the invaluable part of you – the soul is priceless

Spiritual leaders are to watch for the souls of their people (Heb. 13:17). Jesus told the parable of the rich farmer to make this point.

Luke 12:15-21 ¹⁵ *And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* ¹⁶ *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:* ¹⁷ *And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?* ¹⁸ *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.* ¹⁹ *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* ²⁰ *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* ²¹ *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.* There is nothing wrong with farming and nothing wrong with being a wealthy farmer. But there is the real danger of putting seed and crops and barns ahead of the soul. The danger is putting a higher value on things of this life instead of putting the highest value on your soul.

4. The outcome of this battle

Abstain from (keep yourself from or refrain from) fleshly lusts (selfish desires) that wage war against your soul. Don't satisfy your sinful selfish desires that will take you away from God and His will for your life. This is our responsibility. In other words, we must exercise self-control. The outcome depends on what we do.

- We must defeat the world by separation (love not the world...)
- We must defeat the devil by standing firm (resist the devil and he will flee from you)
- We must defeat the flesh by self-control (walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh)