

## Bold in Battle – The Good Fight of Faith: Part Ten

*Ephesians 6:19-20 (ESV)*

**Ephesians 6:18–20 (ESV)** — **18** praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

**19** and [praying] also for me,

- that words may be given to me
- in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,
- **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains,
- that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Q: What is the purpose of an army? Why does the king, and the people of the kingdom, pay out the enormous costs of recruiting, housing, feeding, paying, equipping, training, maintaining, and fielding an army?

A: 1) It isn't so the soldiers lead a comfortable, convenient life – for their benefit and to suit their purposes, plans, dreams, & desires. It's just plain not so. 2) It isn't so that the army can march in pretty formations around parade fields in peacetime. -- Rather, the purpose of the army is to accomplish any mission assigned – to protect against all enemies, to provide humanitarian relief, to quickly deploy in disaster response, to guard the freedom of lanes for global commerce, to depose tyrants, and ultimately to defeat the enemy on any battlefield in war.

The same is true in Christian spiritual warfare. Spiritual warriors accomplish the mission of our King!

Billy Graham wrote the following about spiritual battle in his book *Angels*:

We live in a perpetual battlefield ...The wars among the nations on earth are mere popgun affairs compared to the fierceness of battle in the spiritual unseen world. This invisible spiritual conflict is waged around us incessantly and unremittingly. Where the Lord works, Satan's forces hinder; where angel beings carry out divine directives, the devils rage. All this comes about because the powers of darkness press their counterattack to recapture the ground held for the glory of God...

Since the fall of Lucifer, that angel of light and son of the morning, there has been no respite in the bitter Battle of the Ages. Night and day Lucifer, the master craftsman of the devices of darkness, labors to thwart God's plan of the ages. We can find inscribed on every page of human history the consequences of the evil brought to fruition by the powers of darkness with the devil in charge. Satan never yields an inch, nor does he ever pause in his opposition to the plan of God to redeem the "cosmos" from his control.

It is this "Battle of the Ages" that I refer to when I write of spiritual warfare. Each battle fought is one part of a larger campaign which is part of a war, and it is the war that I am focused upon fighting and winning, not merely my own internal struggle with my flesh or even individual battles with spiritual forces.

Certainly, just as a soldier must endure physical fatigue and survive hand-to-hand combat with the enemy in order to play a continuing role in the larger war, Christian disciples need victory in close quarters battle as well. In the closing paragraphs of *Angels*, Dr. Graham gave this testimony and reveals the key to personal deliverance:

As I look back over my life I remember the moment I came to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The angels rejoiced! Since then I have been in thousands of battles with Satan and his demons. As I yielded my will and committed myself totally to Christ - as I prayed and believed - I am convinced that God "put a hedge about me", a hedge of angels to protect me... Thank God for the ministry of His blessed angels!

I humbly join him in praising our Father for the ministry of angels and I am sure that we couldn't survive without their interventions. But, just as when Dr. Graham has shared the Gospel with live audiences totaling over 210 million around the globe, the primary source of victory in the Christian's warfare which he advocated in the above passage is Jesus Christ - and the proclamation of His gospel, making disciples in His name, equipping "the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..." Ephesians 4:12 (ESV)

PAUL asked for the prayers of the church, for boldness in that battle, courage in the face of the enemy. THE APOSTLE PAUL! Now on his 4<sup>th</sup> missionary journey – this one under Roman guard, imprisoned for two+ years while he's waiting to stand before the Caesar Nero to hear his appeal.

## Paul

**2 Corinthians 11:23–28 (ESV)** — **23** Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. **24** Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; **26** on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; **27** in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. **28** And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

**2 Corinthians 1:8–11 (ESV)** — **8** For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. **9** Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. **10** He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. **11** You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

**Romans 1:15–16 (ESV)** — **15** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. **16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...

**Acts 20:17–38 (ESV)** — **Luke writes** Now from Miletus [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. **18** And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, **19** serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through

the plots of the Jews; **20** how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, **21** testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. **22** And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, **23** except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. **24** But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. **25** And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. **26** Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, **27** for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. **28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. **29** I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30** and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. **31** Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. **32** And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

...

**Acts 21:8–13 (ESV) — Luke continues** On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. **9** He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. **10** While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. **11** And coming to us, he took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’ ” **12** When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. **13** Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

### Old Testament examples of boldness, & courage:

**Joshua 1:6–9 (ESV) —** **6** Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. **7** Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. **8** This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

**1 Samuel 17:45–47 (ESV) — David & Goliath** Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. **46** This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, **47** and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.”

**Psalms 27:1–3 (ESV)** — **1** The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? **2** When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. **3** Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

**1 Kings 18:1–19 (ESV)** — **Elijah’s boldness before King Ahab** After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.” **2** So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. [Obeying that command meant certain death, his wife Jezebel had killed all the prophets of the LORD, except those Obadiah had hidden in caves] ... **17** When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” **18** And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed [false gods and false prophets]...”

**Daniel Chapter 3 — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to serve the gods of Nebuchadnezzar. After they were delivered from the fire** The king answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. **29** Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.”

**Daniel Chapter 6 — Daniel refused to stop praying to the only true God** “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.” Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den

Hebrews Chapter 11 – The Hall of Faith

## **New Testament examples of boldness**

**Acts 4:13–20 (ESV)** — **13** Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. **14** But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. **15** But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, **16** saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. **17** But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” **18** So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19** But Peter and John answered them, “**Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.**”

**Acts 4:23–31 (ESV)** — **23** When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. **24** And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, **25** who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? **26** The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his

Anointed’— **27** for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. **29** And now, Lord, **look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,** **30** while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” **31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and **continued to speak the word of God with boldness.**

**Acts 14:1–7 (ESV)** — **1** Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. **2** But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. **3** So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. **4** But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. **5** When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, **6** they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, **7** and there they continued to preach the gospel.

**1 Thessalonians 2:2 (ESV)** — **2** But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

**Philippians 1:12–14 (ESV)** — **Paul testifies** I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me [false testimony in Jerusalem that led to imprisonment for over two years, transport to Rome, & house arrest in Rome] has really served to advance the gospel, **13** so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. **14** **And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.**

**Philippians 1:19–21 (ESV)** — **19** for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, **20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

**Revelation 12:10–11 (ESV)** — **10** And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. **11** And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

**1 John 4:17–19 (ESV)** — **17** By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. **19** We love because he first loved us.