

“A Father’s Day ‘Call to Arms’”

Ephesians 6:10-18

Some years ago, (more than I care to mention here) after the arrival of our firstborn, I was, as most parents are, very intentional about “getting this right”. I had seen so many sad tales, movies, and TV shows about how the dad “was never there” or gambled or drank or joined Hell’s Angels and lived life on the wild side while mom stayed home and raised the kids. I was gratified to learn, much too late for the news to do my panic any good, that even Billy Graham struggled to “be there”. Not that Billy ever rode with the Hell’s Angels mind you, but even a noble calling such as Billy’s can compromise the responsibilities of fatherhood. Someone once asked Billy’s wife, Ruth, if she ever considered divorce. “No,” she said, “But I did contemplate homicide a few times.”

A lot of the “self-help” books and articles I ran across and even resources available to fathers today propel an underlying theme. Just about everything I read or have seen since either centers around or talked about battle: "Tender Warrior" by Stu Weber, "Raising A Modern Day Knight" by Robert Lewis, "Deadly Viper - 7 Assassins of Character" by Judd Wilhite and Mark Foster. Not to mention all the numerous references in different blogs about "fighting for what is right". So, I began to think and pray, "God, what can I do?" Paul goes on to give the answer in verses 13 - 18, the Armor of God to protect me and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Paul writes in Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Wait a minute, I'm supposed to the spiritual forces of evil? How am I supposed to do that? The first thing for Dads to realize is this: Dad you are in a holy war!

The problem is that most dads are not seeing church or even their own Christian life that way. Some people see the Christianity as like a hospital. The church is basically a hospital. We take in people who are sick in sin and Christ heals them, and the purpose of the church is to be like a spiritual hospital. And in one sense, that is true. Christ came not to the healthy but the sick. He came to heal us of our fundamental problem - sin. But – is that all church is – a hospital? Is that all you see the church as?

But there are other ways of viewing the church and Christ. Some see Christianity as fire insurance. You believe a few theological truths, such as Jesus lived, died and rose again for our sins, and that’s about it. When you feel like it, you come to church and do a few other Christian things, like get married in church and so on. But mostly, Christianity is fire insurance, to make sure that after you die you’ll go up instead of going down. But is that all there is to Christianity? Sure, for true Christians – there is fire insurance for the future. But is that all there is to being a Christian? Fire insurance.

Others have other views of the church and Christianity. Some see Christianity like a social club. You can come along every now and then, when there’s nothing better to do on on a Sunday. Sing some songs, hear some lessons to help with living life such as how to raise your kids, how to

have a good marriage. It's also a good chance to meet other people, make friends with nice people. A good place for the kids to meet other kids in a wholesome environment. But overall, church is like a social club. And it's certainly true that in some ways church is like a social club. Likeminded people meeting together for a common goal. Good opportunity to make friends and get good advice for life. Yes, church is that. But – is that all there is to church, to the Christian life?

Then there's another image of the church. The church as an army. The Christian as a soldier. The image that as Christians we are in a cosmic battle, in a battle in our own individual walks with Christ. But not just in a battle as a lone soldier, but as part of the church army involved in a larger, cosmic battle. A battle for the purity of the church - purity in doctrine, in behavior. And a battle not just for those in the church, but a battle for those not in the church now. A battle for souls. Souls – people who don't yet know Jesus. This view of the church - the church as an army, the Christian as a soldier, is the view that Paul gives us today.

Our verses today, Ephesians 6:10-18, are about a spiritual battle. They are about holy war, that if you are a Christian, you are in whether you know it or not. If you don't know you are in a battle, that may be a sign you are losing the battle. So, pay attention please, as we go through these few verses and as we learn about this spiritual battle. Let's have a look at these verses.

Ephesians 6:10-18 Holman Christian Standard Bible Christian Warfare

10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. 12 For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. 13 This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take the shield of faith, and with it you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word. 18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

Now you might think it a bit strange to select this passage of Scripture for a Father's Day message. To bad. You see, Father's Day is the one opportunity a pastor gets to help dads "get it right". That's not because I am any preeminent authority on raising children...far from it. But I am speaking this morning from the One Who IS that preeminent authority and dad, you ignore Him at your...and your children's peril.

You see, most dads today think if they get their sons and daughters to piano lessons or football practice or the soccer game, they've successfully contributed to their children's upbringing. Sadly, God profoundly disagrees.

There was a time when dads could arrive home after a hard day at the factory, kick off his shoes grab the paper and do a swan dive into the recliner waiting for mom to call “supper is ready” and after enjoying a wholesome intake of the four food groups, return to the recliner while mom helped the kids with homework. Mom and the teachers could be trusted to get the children educated in ‘reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic.

Not so much anymore. While mom can certainly still be trusted, what mom may not know is that they need to “Get with the program!” The new educational paradigm is, “White people are inherently oppressive. Gender identity is completely fluid. Climate change will destroy the world. And America is the ultimate source of evil in the world. (“Battle for The American Mind, Pete Hegeseth, p. 6).

Even college students are not safe from the ravages of progressive indoctrination. There’s a new exercise spreading across the campuses of our country today. It’s called the “Privilege Walk”

Participants stand in a straight line in the middle of an empty room. Tell participants that some statements might be of a sensitive nature for some individuals, and that they do not have to respond to any statement that is uncomfortable. Read the statements below.

If your ancestors came to the United States by force, take one step back. (You know what they’re getting at here; notice there’s no statement like *“If your ancestors came to the United States to seek freedom and a better life, take one step forward.”*)

If there were more than 50 books in your house growing up, take one step forward. (See below.)

If you believe that you were denied employment because of your race, gender, or ethnicity, take 1 step back. (“If you BELIEVE ...” Not too subjective, eh?)

If you believe that you were paid less because of your race, gender, or ethnicity, take one step back. (Again, “If you BELIEVE ...”)

If you were ever stopped or questioned by the police because of your race, take one step back. (Huh? “Excuse me, sir. I pulled you over because I noticed you are black ...”)

If you can buy new clothes or go out to dinner when you want to, take one step forward. (*See below.*)

If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step forward. (*See below.*)
Regarding the exercise, Michigan says that “[e]very statement addresses some small privilege that is based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, or sexual orientation.”

No, it doesn’t. Some of these can be attributed simply to smart, frugal planning and determination.

For example, neither of my parents went to college (they married at age 20 and 18 respectively). Yet, our house had way over 50 books in it when I was growing up. It wasn’t because my sisters and I were “privileged,” it was because my parents, despite lacking college, weren’t stupid. They knew that education is important and took steps accordingly.

Similarly, look at the second-to-last on the list above. Is that due to being fairly well-off, or to ... wise financial discretion?

Co-worker: "Mr. H, my brother — don't we get along just fine?" Me: "Yes, absolutely. I certainly think so!" Co-worker: "Me too. So what the heck are we doing this for??"

You see how deceiving this exercise is? If you are not a well-grounded person, or someone of the easily manipulated persuasion, this exercise would create animosities and divisions and exacerbate biases that had previously never existed in your mind!

You see, dads, (since this is your Sunday in the bull ring) I used to think that the 6th chapter of Ephesians was just about ME and my own spiritual well-being and safety. NOT! DAD! If I told you that someone was going to invade your home tonight and molest your children what would you do!? Would you be ready?

DADS! Your children are being spiritually, morally, culturally and psychologically molested five days a week in most of our schools! If you ever needed the whole armor of God, not just to protect yourself but to protect your children IT IS NOW!

The battlefield for the hearts and minds of our nation's children is the 16,000 hours they spend inside American classrooms from kindergarten to twelfth grade.

We used to learn our ABC's... "Adam, who was the first man": Genesis 1:27, 2:7, etc.

"Bethlehem, where Jesus was born": Matt. 2:1, Luke 2:1-4

"Cain who slayed his brother": Gen. 4:1, 8

"Dan'l who was cast in the lion's den": Daniel 6

"Elijah, who was taken up to heaven": Elijah's story

"Goliath who was slain by David":

Now it's: "A is for Activist, L is for LGBTQ, T is for Trans, X if for Malcolm X and so on.

At Creekside Intermediate School in Michigan, students read "Black Brother, Black Brother" which highlights a black student who feels like he is "constantly swimming in whiteness". Cambridge, Massachusetts public schools' "Early Childhood Curriculum" teaches black families to be "free from patriarchal practices" as part of the "disruption of Western nuclear family dynamics" Kindergarten students in Illinois are fourth and fifth graders in parts of Pennsylvania also read "Not My idea: A Book About Whiteness". The book pounds home the idea that being white is inherently evil and that being black means you are inherently oppressed.

This and so much more is sheer indoctrination into a ungodly, evil rebellious mindset that will not only inoculate these children from any effort at gospel conversion, but will actually create in their hearts and minds a resentment against anything God.

- I. The Belt of Truth (Vs. 14) Dads, how can you know what "truth" is unless it comes from God? How can your children know?
- II. The Breastplate of Righteousness (Vs. 14) Protection of the vital organs.
- III. The Sandals of the Gospel of Peace (Vs. 15):

- IV. The Shield of Faith (Vs. 16)
- V. The Helmet of Salvation (Vs. 17)
- VI. The Sword of the Spirit (Vs. 17)

There has never been a time when your children have been exposed to such dangerous indoctrinations. You dad are called, by God, to be the protector of your home. The high priest of its spiritual wellbeing. You have a responsibility to not only guard your children in this life, but to provide for their equipping that they have Heaven as their home in the life to come.

So, I urge you fellow fathers, put on your armor and grab your weapon. It's time to do battle to win our families back. It's time to reinforce the front lines and push forward to win this war. No more letting others do battle in our place. If this war is to be won, it will require every father to pick up his arms and fight. This my friend, is your call to arms.