

Veterans of the Faith

Summary: What it takes to be a veteran of the faith of Christ, something we all need to be and do.

1. Obey the Commander
2. Engage the enemy
3. Fight to the end

Romans 13:8

INTRO: ILL.- When Dwight D. Eisenhower was President from 1953 to 1961, he received a letter from eight-year-old Keith Aiken of Trumbull, CT. Kevin wrote, *“After listening to the news about the cold war, I am worried about the people in the world. In thinking it over, I have a plan. Get all the leaders together who want war, put them in a ring and let them fight it out.”*

I’m sure that many veterans of foreign war feel this same way about war. Just let those who want to fight, do the fighting! Don’t involve everybody else in it!

War is a terrible thing and yet it seems that war is inevitable in our world.

Matt. 24:6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

Most Bible commentators believe, however, that Jesus was talking about the coming destruction of Jerusalem, which took place about 70 A.D. But could it be that wars are also a sign of the second coming of Christ? Many people believe so. Wars do seem inevitable.

ILL. - Gen. Sherman once said, *“You don’t know the horrible aspects of war. I’ve been through two wars and I know. I’ve seen cities and homes in ashes. I’ve seen*

thousands of men lying on the ground, their dead faces looking up at the skies. I tell you, war is hell!"

I don't question Sherman's feelings and convictions about war. If you've never been there you just don't know.

However, I have heard it put this way. *WAR IS HELLISH, BUT NOT HELL!* And based upon Scripture, I would say this is true.

Nothing is as horrible as hell.

ILL. - WWII qualifies it as perhaps the greatest war, or the most hellish war in history.

In all, 61 countries with 1.7 billion people, three-fourths of the world's population, took part.

In terms of money spent, it has been put at more than \$1 trillion dollars, which makes it the most expensive war of all.

The human cost of lives, not including the 5 to 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust, is estimated to have been 55 million dead – 25 million of those military and 30 million civilian. War is indeed hellish!

Some aspects of war are never right, regardless of the war, but we must support those are willing to go and give on behalf of their country!

As someone wrote:

It is the VETERAN, not the preacher, who has given us freedom of religion.

It is the VETERAN, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the VETERAN, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the VETERAN, not the campus organizer, who has given us freedom to assemble.

It is the VETERAN, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the VETERAN, not the politician, who has given us the right to vote.

It is the VETERAN, who salutes the Flag, who serves under the Flag.

This past week on Tuesday...we tried to honor all our armed service veterans. To you, veterans, we owe a debt of gratitude because you were willing to go, to serve and to give on behalf of the United States of America! God bless you!

PROP. -

Now let's think about what it takes to be a veteran of the faith in Christ, something we all need to be and do.

- 1- Obey the Commander
- 2- Engage the enemy
- 3- Fight to the end

I. OBEY THE COMMANDER

ILL. - A blowhard Air Force major was promoted to colonel and got a new office. The first morning he was in his new office an airman knocked on the door and asked to speak to him. The colonel, feeling the urge to impress the young airman, picked up his phone and began talking.

“Yes, General, thank you. Yes, I will pass that information along to the President this afternoon. Yes, goodbye, sir.” Then, turning to the airman, he barked, “AND WHAT DO YOU WANT?”

“Nothing important, sir,” said the airman, “I JUST CAME TO HOOK UP YOUR TELEPHONE.” LOL =)

Some people have authority... and some just pretend to have authority. Some people have authority... and some just “wanna be” in authority.

Our President has authority.

While many may not agree with everything he does or says, he is still our Commander-in-Chief. We must support him in prayer.

II Tim. 2:3-4 “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer.”

Our ultimate commander-in-chief is the Lord Jesus Christ!

Ephesians 1:22 “And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.” Christ is the head of the body, the church. WE NEED TO LISTEN TO HIM!

ILL. - Shortly after joining the Navy, the new recruit asked his officer for a pass so he could attend a wedding. The officer gave him the pass, but informed the young man he would have to be back by 7 p.m. Sunday. "You don't understand, sir," said the recruit. "I'm in the wedding."

"No, you don't understand," the officer shot back. "You're in the Navy!".

ILL. - One afternoon author Patsy Clairmont found herself on an airplane, sitting next to a young man. She writes, "I had already observed something about this young man when I was being seated. He called me "Ma'am." At the time I thought, 'Either he thinks I'm ancient, or he's from the South where they still teach manners, or he's in the service.' I decided the latter was the most likely, so I asked, "You in the service?" "Yes, Ma'am, I am." "What branch?" "Marines."

"Hey, Marine, where are you coming from?" "Operation desert Storm, Ma'am."
"No kidding? Desert Storm! How long were you there?" I asked. "A year and a half. I'm on my way home. My family will be at the airport."

I then commented that he must have thought about returning to his family and home many times while he was in the Middle East. "Oh, no, Ma'am," he replied. "We were taught never to think of what might never be, but to be fully available right where we were."

Jesus, our Commander-in-chief said in [Luke 6:46](#) "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" What else is there to say?

II. ENGAGE THE ENEMY

ILL. - An eighteen-year-old apparently took a Seattle police car for a joyride. The theft was reported on law-enforcement broadcasts, and a bicycle patrol officer in downtown Seattle spotted it. A police car immediately gave chase but lost sight of the stolen vehicle after pausing to check for oncoming traffic at an intersection. It was then that a second police car pulled up and - thinking the stopped car was the stolen vehicle - rammed it from behind.

Two policemen in the car that had been hit thought they were under attack. So they pulled out their guns and started shooting. A police spokesperson said the officers involved - two in the rammed car and one in the other - exchanged more than twenty rounds before they discovered their mistake! **THEY WERE SHOOTING AT ONE ANOTHER!**

Brothers and sisters, this is not much different than some churches. Some church members do more shooting at one another than they do the real enemy.

We Christians are at war, but we are not to be at war with one another! When we fight with one another we are only helping the enemy. The devil loves church fights, etc. We need to fight against such things by fighting against him!

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."

I Peter 5:8 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. "

ILL. - Joe Louis became the heavyweight-boxing champion of the world in 1934 and successfully defended the title twenty-five times over the following fifteen years. The sports voice of those days, Bill Stern, asked Joe how he had been able to knock out his opponents so quickly in almost every fight. After a few moments, he answered, "Two things—first, I study my opponent until I know him better than he knows himself, and second, I make a plan of attack."

What is our spiritual plan of attack?

ILL. - An old deacon who used to pray every Wednesday night at prayer meeting always concluded his prayer the same way: "And, Lord, clean all the cobwebs out of my life."

It got to be too much for one fellow in the prayer meeting. He had heard the old deacon one time too often. So when the man made that prayer, the fellow jumped to his feet and shouted: "Lord, Lord, don't do it! Kill the spider!"

Sometimes we are focused on the cobwebs instead of what caused the cobwebs, the real enemy, Satan. We all have cobwebs in our lives, but our real enemy is Satan. We need to fight against him. We do that by bringing in the big guns of prayer, Bible study, church, giving, serving, etc.

I Peter 5:8-9 “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

WE FIGHT THE ENEMY BY DOING THE FAITH STUFF IN LIFE!

III. FIGHT TO THE END

Matthew 10:22 “All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

Matthew 24:12-14 “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

ILL. - A man said, "A young friend of mine just got back from boot camp. It was a rude awakening to life in the military. It was 24/7 for him - not 9:00 to 5:00."

The Christian life is not a matter of coming to church on Sunday morning and then forgetting all about the faith the rest of the week. It's 24/7.

ILL. - The young recruit turned his nose up at the Army stew and complained to the mess sergeant, "I don't like this stew. Don't I have any choice here?" The sergeant replied, "CERTAINLY, SOLDIER. TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT."

Brothers and sisters, we are called to fight in a war, not sit around and gripe about what we don't like in life or in the church.

ILL. - The following is attributed to "Gentleman Jim" Corbett, who held the heavyweight boxing title for five years at the end of the nineteenth century:

“Fight one more round. When your feet are so tired that you have to shuffle back to the center of the ring, fight one more round.

“When your arms are so tired that you can hardly lift your hands to guard yourself, fight one more round. When your nose is bleeding and your eyes are black and you are so tired that you wish your opponent would crack you on the jaw and put you to sleep, fight one more round—remembering that the man who fights one more round is never whipped.”

Fight one more round. After that round, we fight another. We must keep on fighting to the end if we expect to experience victory.

ILL. - After the deliverance at Dunkirk, Churchill rallied Britain with his most memorable speech. He said: “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.”

II Timothy 4:7 “I have fought the good fight.” Have we? Will we? Will we ‘til our dying day?

Conclusion:

ILL. - John Stuart Mill, philosopher from London, England, died in 1873, said, “War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight is a miserable creature...”

There are some things are worth fighting for: our freedom in America and our freedom in Christ!

God bless the USA! God bless our US veterans! And God bless the veterans of the Christian faith!