

# Fighting the good fight of Faith!

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Date: 26 October 2025

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[ 0 : 01 ] Greetings to each of you this morning. In Jesus' name, it's good to be here.! It seems special to be here when you're not together for 14 days.

The question when we were at the ministers' meetings in Ohio, what is the Gospel?

If I would ask that to you this morning, what's the first thing you think of when asked, what is the Gospel? The good news.

That's actually what the word means. The good news. And what this brother was referring to was there's a modern Gospel and then there's a true Gospel and there's many other would-be Gospels that people believe in.

The modern Gospel is, and we didn't talk a lot about this, but a little bit, about knowing Jesus or coming to Christ and being saved.

[ 1 : 24 ] He died for our sins on the cross. And most people accept that Gospel. But Jesus came and preached a Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It's not another Gospel. It's the same, but it's all of the Gospel. And we focused a little bit about that. You know, what Gospel are we preaching?

Are we preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom? The Gospel where there's a King and He lives in the hearts of His people and He controls their life, if you will.

He requires, like we heard in the opening, a surrender to Him, the King. Is He our King? Is He our Lord? Or is it easier just to say, well, He's our Savior?

But when it comes to the Lord part, the King part, the Kingdom part, the Word of God part, a lot of people reject that. They just want to know Him as maybe a baby in the manger or as a Savior that came.

[ 2 : 34 ] But anyway, that was really thought-provoking to me. I needed to hear that again. Like, is He the King that I surrender my life to? And I know we preach and teach that.

We try to, right? I think all of you would agree that you do, and we all do. But that is not the modern Gospel of today. The modern Gospel is very easy and doesn't really require any change in your life. So that was a blessing. Just that simple question. What is the Gospel? Something that really spoke to me, and there was many other things that were, we were very encouraged, very strengthened through that.

I was just thinking, as we were singing this morning, how that last Sunday, we spent the day, a couple days with Ellie's family.

They had rented a place for us to be together in a big house. And most of her brothers and sisters were there. And we were sitting around.

[ 3 : 42 ] I was wondering all, you know, evening Saturday and the next morning, I wonder what, are they going to have a service or something? Or what's it going to be like? There's a couple of them are preachers.

They're all Amish. And we sat down to sing some songs, and the one preacher said that I should share something, just right there on the spot.

And so, yeah, God gave us something that, well, something I had been thinking about recently, and that was, how are we justified?

what makes you righteous? And I got to share that. And we ended up with kind of a Bible study, actually, about that subject.

What makes us righteous? And just thinking about that this morning is like, wow. I never dreamt that could happen in her family.

[ 4 : 46 ] that we would sit around and talk about the righteousness that is in Christ and in Him alone. And in agreement with them agreeing.

That's how we become righteous. I just marvel at that. So that was really special. And then we got to visit Manny and Fanny for a little bit Friday.

there in North Carolina at their home. That was a blessing. He's doing pretty well, I think, physically and spiritually also.

So it was encouraging. Our time away was very encouraging. And just also the blessings of God. just thinking this morning and all my children, all our children are here.

And I'm just so blessed with that. Thank you for coming. It's been good to have John's with us this summer. I know that time is running out quickly for that.

[ 5 : 47 ] But it's been a blessing. Our Christian faith. Is your faith in Christ worth the fight?

Is being in this kingdom that we're talking about, is it worth the fight? We know the answer to that mentally. It is worth the fight.

But we also we know that the Christian life is not a playground. It's a battlefield. And when we come to Christ, we don't just come to Christ to make life easy.

Even though we get many blessings from coming to Christ, we are fulfilled, right? We get joy, unspeakable, the Bible says, full of glory.

But we're in a battlefield. battlefield. When we come to Christ, we join the army of the living God. And you were born into a fight.

[ 7 : 00 ] Not with weapons of this world, but weapons like faith, like prayer, and the Word of God. the weapons that Jesus used in this fight.

Today, people want peace without a battle. They want victory without a struggle. And rewards without sacrifice.

But Paul told Timothy to fight the good fight of faith. So we know there's a fight. There's a battle. There's a war. And we are called today, if Timothy was called to fight that good fight, then are we not also called to that fight?

The good fight of faith? The Christian life requires courage. It requires endurance. It requires complete trust in Jesus.

[ 8 : 06 ] But it's worth the fight because Jesus already secured the victory. In one place in my notes, I don't know where it is, but it talks about how that we are not fighting for victory, but we are fighting in victory.

The victories already happen with Jesus. So we are in a spiritual war. In Ephesians 6, we read about not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the rulers of darkness of this world.

And the moment that we accept Christ, we are enlisted in a spiritual conflict. How many of you have ever been tired of the conflict?

Just be honest. You've struggled with the battle of being a Christian. I didn't ask you if you gave up. I just said, do you get weary sometimes of the battle?

We fight against a world that tempts us to compromise. We fight against the flesh that wants to comfort. It wants comfort instead of commitment.

[ 9 : 28 ] We want a life of ease. We want it to be easy. Right? I do. I don't like hardship.

I should add, without a cause. You know, when we know what we're fighting for, then that makes it worth the fight.

The Christian fights against a devil who whispers lies and discouragement. We can think of all those lies. One of the big ones is, did God say?

Hath God said. And Satan doesn't bother those who aren't a threat to his kingdom. You see, there's that kingdom as well.

There is the kingdom of darkness. Are you a threat this morning to the kingdom of darkness?

[ 10 : 30 ] I ask myself that. Am I a threat to them? Are you He doesn't bother those that are not a threat, or at least not as much.

But you belong to Christ's kingdom. Those that have been born of the Spirit, born again. We belong. We have been translated into the kingdom of light, right?

And if that has happened, then we are a target. That's why the Bible says, Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

In 2 Timothy 2. Are we a good soldier? Are we a good soldier? And putting up a good fight?

Fight of faith? Or have we fallen? You know, it's not a fight of anger or hatred. That would be a bad fight.

[ 11 : 38 ] But it's a good fight. Because it's for a holy cause. And too many people are fighting in the wrong kingdom. Or at least with the tools of the wrong kingdom.

How can we know? How can you and I know that we're in the true kingdom? And fighting? Or whether somebody else is.

Isn't it by the weapons they are using? Isn't it by the weapons they are using? Is it when we use Satan's weapons versus God's weapons? Or maybe by the life they are living?

A selfish life versus a serving life? Somebody said that every spiritual battle that you face is proof that your faith is alive.

Every spiritual battle that you face is proof that your faith is alive.

[ 12 : 47 ] I just lost my place here. How is your fight?

In Romans 8. Romans 8 is such a beautiful chapter. But in verse 37 it says, In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

More than conquerors. We've talked about this before. We know what a conqueror is. But what is more than a conqueror? How is it?

When is the last time, and I know Enos asked us a question. I think questions are good for us.

Because it makes us think, well what's the answer to the question? So I might be going, I tend to do that.

I ask questions. But when is the last time that you had a spiritual victory in your journey? What have you overcome?

[ 13 : 55 ] And how did you overcome it, you might ask? Are we overcomers? Can we look back and say, yeah, I'm not like that anymore.

I have some more things in my life to overcome. And I'm sure you do too. God is not here to condemn us this morning, but to encourage us to continue in the fight.

And it's not by our own power. That's one thing that we must realize. We must recognize and realize that we cannot be overcomers on our own.

Paul also said there in Ephesians 6, verse 10, to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. We don't win battles by our own talent, our willpower, our own emotions.

We win by His strength. Even David said, the battle is the Lord's in Samuel. I was reading in there this morning a little bit about how David, he went to the fight.

[ 15 : 13 ] You know, we know the story how his dad actually, Jesse, sent him out to his brothers to give them food and things and to check up on them.

And so he went out to the battle and we know the story. I'm sure we all know it from childhood probably, but just how that his big brothers treated him like he was a little kid and told him he was naughty and who, by the way, who's taking care of dad's sheep and we know why you're here, the one said.

You're here to just watch the fight. But David, because he was a man of faith by then already, I don't know how old he was. Maybe, does anybody know how old David was?

Was he 17? Kind of what we think. I'm not sure why, but I've heard that. But he was young. Too young to be in the army.

But he was a man of faith. What did he say when he went toward Goliath? He said, you come toward me with your weapons, but I come to you in the name of the Lord.

[ 16 : 28 ] He knew God. And that's the key in this battle that we're talking about, this spiritual battle. And I want to encourage us this morning in this.

He went in the name of the Lord. When we feel weak, that's when His power shines. Corinthians also, Paul's words. My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

God speaking through Paul. And God gives us the tools that we need. He gave us everything we need. He gave us the truth to stand on God's Word when lies surround us.

There are many lies. But He gave us the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness to walk clean before God in His righteousness.

Not our own, but in His. He is the one that makes us righteous like we talked about. The shield of faith to block every fiery dart of doubt.

[ 17 : 43 ] The helm of salvation. The helmet of salvation to protect our minds from despair and those lies. The Word of the Spirit to use Scripture to cut through the darkness.

What did Jesus do when He was tempted? He was tempted. We know how He went out in the desert and was tempted by the devil. He used Scripture.

He always came back, but the Scripture has said. We have that, don't we? Are we using it? Are we lifting up the Word of God when we're tempted or when we're struggling and claiming it? Claiming the promises of God. We have prayer. Our constant line of strength. And I just wrote down here, we don't pray enough.

I should say, I don't pray enough. But I assume you don't either. Do we? Do we pray enough? Is that an area that we're weak in?

[ 18 : 56 ] If we're wearing this armor, we can stand strong, stand firm in any storm. The Bible says, to have done all to stand. I want to talk about some of our sufferings and things that we face.

Sufferings are temporary, but the rewards are eternal. again in Romans 8, verse 18, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The sufferings that we face today and tomorrow are not worthy to be compared, Paul says, to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

We don't want to portray the Christian life as easy. It can be and is hard. Many have been, many of us have been, have faced rejection.

Not as bad as other people though in the world. The world may mock us, trials may weary us, but the rewards outweigh the pain.

[ 20 : 29 ] We have experienced that even already in this life. That rewards outweigh the pain even in this life, I would say.

We're not even home yet. But the rewards of being a Christian are great. We might lose some friends, but you gain a Savior.

You might lose comfort, but you gain a crown. We may struggle in this life, but a mansion is waiting for us, Jesus said. We may struggle.

We may struggle in many areas of life. Some people struggle all their life, it seems like, in many areas, and they have persecution or suffering. Think of Paul.

The life of Paul. The way he, much of what he wrote to encourage us today, that we get encouragement from, he wrote out of prison. Sometimes in bonds.

[ 21 : 35 ] The eternal crown. In 2 Timothy, verse 4, 7, and 8, you can turn there if you want.

Could somebody get me a cup of water back there? I'm not thirsty, but my voice is a little...

No, 2 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 7, 8, I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

You know, Paul said those words nearly 2,000 years ago.

Thank you. He said he has fought a good fight. He has kept the faith.

[ 22 : 41 ] He's finished his course. Can we say that? Is it proud to say that? Do you think Paul was proud? I think it took humility to say that or to write that.

We sometimes, if somebody would say, well, I've kept the faith. I mean, if it's Christ in you that gave you that power, then that's not proud. Paul's life was filled with hardship.

Beatings, prison, rejection. But at the end, he could say, it was worth it all. That same crown of righteousness, life and glory, awaits every faithful believer who endures to the end.

And that's what I want to bring out to us this morning, that we are no different. If we endure to the end, Jesus said that many times.

He that endureth to the end shall be saved. And a crown of righteousness. I don't know what that crown looks like, but I want it.

[ 23 : 54 ] I want to be and have whatever God has for me. Is that our end goal? Is to be with Jesus?

Just being with Him will be a crown. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life, Jesus said in Revelations 2.10.

Revelation 2.10. Be thou faithful unto death. We are called to be a faithful people. If you forget anything else in this message, let's remember that.

We are called to be faithful. And that's where the promise is. And I will give thee a crown of life.

Again, I don't know exactly what that all is, but it sounds good to me. Jesus is worth it all.

[ 25 : 03 ] And also, He, Christ, let's look at how Christ fought for us. We heard about that this morning in the devotional. But before we ever fought for Him, before we ever stood for truth, before we ever stood strong in the faith, let's remember that He stood for us.

He fought for us. He fought sin in Gethsemane. He fought the devil in the wilderness and death on the cross.

And He won. He won the victory. He now holds the keys of death and of hell. He didn't turn back when the cross got heavy.

And He didn't quit when the nails went in. He fought until He could cry, it is finished. It is finished. Where would we be if He would have gave up? And He would have said, the road's too hard. I can't do this. I mean, He was at that place. He literally was there as a human being.

[ 26 : 26 ] I believe He was at that place where He asked God if it's possible to remove this cup. It's too bitter. But what did He say?

In the end of that, He still said, but Your will be done. Not what I feel. But what You want. And that's the place He's calling us to.

Not our will, but His will. It is finished. That's why we keep fighting. Because He is worthy. The Lamb is worthy. Because He suffered and fought for us.

Now we fight for His cause. For His kingdom like we were talking about. for His truth, His word, His purposes is why we fight the fight of faith.

in John 16, verse 33, it says, In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer.

[ 27 : 31 ] How did He end that verse? I mean, if He would have just said, in the world you're going to have trials and tribulation. Period.

But He didn't. He said, be of good cheer. And then what's the last line? I have overcome the world. See, our King has overcome. And we're in His kingdom. Where does that put us today? To be overcomers. I have overcome the world.

And here's that line that I quoted earlier. We don't fight for victory. This is not in the Bible. But we fight from victory. And I get that meaning.

That Jesus has already won the victory. So we fight from a position of victory. Not from defeat. But from a position of victory.

[ 28 : 35 ] Because He has already won it. He has already overcome. And if He's our Lord and our King, we fight from that position. There's a difference.

We're not from, you know, down here in the gutter still. No. We're in His kingdom. We're part of the heavenly kingdom.

And He has overcome the world. Be of good cheer. Cheer up. Rejoice. That we have a different platform than what we used to have to fight from.

We fight from a position of victory. Because of what Jesus has done. Because the grave is empty and our Savior reigns.

And if He overcame, so will you. If your faith is in Him. Don't lose faith.

[ 29 : 34 ] desce the tragedy of men that lose their faith when all they needed to do is stand up and fight on and not give up because of Christ.

we are called to persevere endure hardships not going to be easy Galatians 6 verse 9 says let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not see there is that possibility of fainting that's simply a term of giving up when the battle gets hard remember who you're fighting for we're fighting for Jesus remember who you're fighting with remember what we're fighting with his word do we believe the word do we believe that it has power Jesus did in one place in the Bible it says I have exalted my word above my name that's a powerful word we know his name's powerful there is no other name we talked about that last Sunday thankfully there is no other name given that we can be saved and yet Jesus said

God said I have exalted my word above my name remember why we're fighting we're fighting for eternal life and for the glory of God don't quit don't give up don't give in the night may be long but the morning is coming and Christ will return with the reward in his hands the night may be long but the morning is coming I had to think of Joanna your parents we visited them that was a kind of a spur of the moment decision but it was such a blessing they're fighting they're still in the fight might be a long night but I believe there are people that love Jesus

I know they are and morning is coming every Christian will face the fire when you feel like giving up look to the cross because Jesus didn't give up on us when we feel weak let's remember that the tomb is empty and when the world says you're losing sometimes the world even calls us losers remember that your victory is written in the blood of Jesus now it's up to us I had to think of that what Jesus said about he that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin it's that simple do we know what's right do we know what to do do we know how to surrender our all to Jesus

I think we do the Hebrew writer said let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith we're talking about faith a trust a belief in Christ and here it says that he Jesus is the author of it he's the one that gives us the faith he's the one that will sustain us and he is the one that will finish our faith this reward is eternal again Paul said I have fought a good fight I have finished my course kept the faith he looked forward to a crown of righteousness and eternal glory in the presence of Christ every tear every prayer every act of faith they all build an eternal testimony a missionary once said he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose could reword that and say that person is wise to give what you can't keep to gain what you cannot lose now I'm confused but anyway

[ 35 : 25 ] I'll just leave it the way he said it he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose that's the heart of faith giving your life to something that lasts forever do we see the kingdom of God the way we should Paul said in Philippians chapter 3 verse 8 I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord he loved Jesus I believe Paul was maybe one of the most committed men in the Bible and it made no difference to him it seemed like it made no difference whether he was having a great time with believers or whether he was shipwrecked the night before or whether he was in prison obviously those were real trials to him not saying it was easy at all but his faith was so unshakable he gave all for us imagine reaching heaven and seeing the scars in Jesus hands believe that every pain everything that we have ever faced will just fade away at that moment what is our commitment to Christ

I want to read just a little part of a note that Jeff put on the chat this morning might not be able to find it but oh here it is don't be the kind of Christian that has enough religion to come to church on Sunday but not enough compassion to go out to the world on Monday just enough religion to go to church but no compassion and that's something that God's been speaking to me lately was where's the passion where's the compassion but where's the passion in my life where's the for the things of God are we passionate people if you're not teaching people how to be saved perhaps you have forgotten the tragedy of being lost these are just thoughts that I don't know I think he got it from a book but have we forgotten the tragedy of being lost the apostles said that they persuade all men to repent knowing therefore the terror of the Lord they persuade men if you're not sharing the message of forgiveness it may be because you don't remember what it was like to be guilty all of us should have been sent to hell but because of the grace of

God through Jesus Christ we weren't but let us never forget though we weren't sent to hell we were sent somewhere we were sent to the lost by being saved you and I are sent to the lost don't quit don't give up your faith when life gets hard God sees your struggle and he's fighting for you Jesus is praying for us we know that he's interceding at the right hand of the father which means praying for us and one day we'll look back and we'll realize it was worth it all just a few more thoughts here couple more verses revelations chapter 2 couple verses

I want to get there verse 10 revelation 2 10 fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tired and you shall have tribulation 10 days have we stepped back from where we once were

I know that I have in my life I know that I have been at a better place with the Lord from one time to another time but I am encouraged I feel like I have been strengthened in the spirit and we're not giving up this fight we should just tell the devil that we're not giving up this fight we will by God's grace keep walking ahead running this race until we are called home will you come along Jesus is worth it it is his kingdom that we fight for and he is our captain and we are on the winning side and once we're home we will only worship him and again it will be worth it all don't ever give in to the pressures around us to try to blend in with the world the world hates

[ 42 : 31 ] Jesus by the way that's what he said and he said if it hated me if they hate me they'll hate you there is a pressure to just blend in with that though we are called instead we are called to stand up for truth stop questioning everything the Bible says and means for the benefit of our own flesh but let our flesh be crucified with Christ keep marching onward as a Christian soldier and you know there's so many hard things in this life that we don't understand we don't always understand but can we make sense out of things let's stand together I we just this morning got word of or my wife saw it

I guess of a little girl little two year old girl just the cutest little girl down in Honduras that died did you hear about that Joe Joanna that young couple that lived on that island or that that young guy that was translating the Bible I can't remember their names but anyway yesterday their little two year old girl died two and a half year old girl thought of thought of my little grandchildren but anyway

I don't know what happened or anything we just saw it online and how do you make sense of that right they are serving the Lord full time and these things happen Ellie's one of her best friends seems to slowly be dying we visited her and realized that unless God heals her it was probably the last time here this earth has been smitten with all kinds of things but it has been smitten with our sin that's why we have death that's why we have trials right but we're not here to stay let me ask you what will it take in your life for you to leave the faith what kind of hardship would it take for you to deny Christ maybe not verbally but just walk away from the faith I wrote that down for myself and I just wrote and I believe this by the grace of God nothing Paul said nothing can take it away

I mean we better be that committed nothing can separate us from the love of God do we believe that this morning are we strong in our faith let's pray father we thank you for the gift of faith thank you lord for providing a way that we can make it home thank you for the blood of Jesus thank you for making us righteous not of our own works our works are only result of you making us righteous lord help us to never get that reversed or mixed up but to rejoice in your righteousness and lord we ask for more and deeper sanctification in this journey that we would become more and more like Christ more and more Christ like help us to challenge each other in the most holy faith to be more Christ like and that you would receive more glory from our lives going forward to and that we just pray lord that each of us would commit to following Jesus i pray lord for anyone here that is discouraged or has been walking away from you or wondering if it's worth it i pray lord that somehow you would just light a fire in their bosom lord that your the fire of your holy spirit would burn in our hearts and light that passion again that we would make it home and not just for ourselves so that we escape hell but because you were slain on the cross because you the lamb of god are worthy of our praise and that's why we were created was to praise you and to worship you for all of eternity father may that begin today in our hearts in a renewed way we pray in

[ 48 : 17 ] Jesus name amen