

Soldier in the army of the Lord

I am coming to realize that some of us believers live our lives as though we were called to be only civilians in this spiritual battle, saved by grace and actively professing Christ as our Lord and Savior, but absent from the battle field where the real war is being waged through evangelizing and sharing ones testimony. The Kingdom of Heaven's future populace temporarily resides here on earth and is recruited into the Lord's army, through salvation, to become soldiers committed to the task of overthrowing satan's kingdom.

Civilians are those of us that, for whatever reason, are more concerned about the day to day rigors of our earthly life and seem to only be interested in how the power associated with the kingdom of Heaven can be used to increase our material possessions, health, professional and social positions, etc., or make us a better person. We aren't necessarily concerned with putting on the full armor of God, nor do we think we have to as long as we can name it and claim it or depend on God's grace to get us what we want, and to see us through the hard times. Civilians are not bad people, really, but are just not equipped to effectively do battle in the areas where the enemy is most vulnerable. Some civilians may think that they are soldiers simple because they have received Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior but the truth of the matter is they are very far from the battlefield. The real distinction between the two resides in the eyes of the enemy - which one is the most capable of doing him the most harm!

To the enemy, this is really all that matters. As long as the civilian is not assuming a threatening position toward the enemy, the enemy can be more at peace with whatever spiritual routine, tradition, or doctrine the believer chooses to indulge. Being a child of God, through salvation, does not necessarily destine the believer to the spiritual battlefield. Satan does not tremble because of your focus on self-accomplishments, or self-fulfillment. Naming it and claiming it is no threat to satan, neither are bible study classes or choir rehearsals. He is not put to flight by Christian fellowshiping or fundraisers. He doesn't care how much scripture you memorize, as long as you don't use it against him. Your ambition for theological head-knowledge is under his radar. He isn't at all alarmed by your provocative self-righteousness or ostentatious piety. He wouldn't at all lose one moment of sleep - if that were possible - if you moved into the church building and took up residence. And, if you think that anything short of winning souls for Christ, and sharing your testimony with others terrifies satan – think again.

Sometimes it is only when the believer hears the calling, the pulling, the tugging from the Holy Spirit, and is obedient to this beckoning that the believer is dispatched to the battle field and placed directly into the cross-hairs of the enemy. However, if the enemy already knows who is destined for the battlefield, and what kind of threat they will pose for his kingdom, it is hunting season as soon as the believer is freed from the womb. This is when the actual spiritual battle begins for those of us satan knows are destined to do great things on the

battlefield, and it never stops! We are marked for life from the cradle to the grave because we are called to overthrow the kingdom of satan by force while here on earth. That's why it is imperative for us to understand the nature of the civilian and that of the soldier.

Soldiers don't have the luxury of being scantily clothed in spiritual armor. We must put on the full armor of God and use every weapon in our arsenal as though our lives are dependent on it, because it is. As soldiers, we can no more afford to adopt the practices and life style of the civilian while fighting this war than a football player adopt the routine of the cheerleaders during the game. The sooner we understand who we are, and what God's purpose for our lives is, the quicker we will realize why the enemy is so determined to destroy us.

I, for one, admit that it can be very alluring and relaxing to assume the relatively unthreatening routine of the civilian while enlisted in the army of the Lord and time and again we are wounded unnecessarily because of our calling – to be a soldier in the army of the Lord! For years, I could not understand why my walk with God was so tumultuous, so filled with pitfalls and landmines in the form of trials, tribulations, and spiritual attacks when those believers that I was trying to pattern myself after, the ones that had the most material blessings, the ones that commanded the most respect, the ones whose lives seemed to be the least effected by the enemy went about their lives in a state of blissful contentment. Then, at last, I received revelation from the Lord, though it almost cost me my life. The problem had been that I was trying to pattern myself after the ways of a civilian, and not those of a soldier.

Soldiers don't necessarily need the material blessing for engaging in warfare. They rarely command respect while humbly following orders. And, they are always mindful of being the target of the enemy. Now it all made sense! Indeed my walk with the Lord is a very personal one and so is my purpose. It is so easy to get caught up in the corporate strategies of other believers at the expense of forsaking a personal strategy of your own. We must first understand what our purpose is, then strategize according to how much of a threat we will be to satan's kingdom and then expect a counter response. The response can easily be determined by how great our contribution will be to the kingdom of God. If satan knows that we are destined for great victory, you can bet that he is not just going to sit around with his arms folded as though we were no threat to him at all. He is going to make sure that all hell breaks out against you, and he will never stop until you become a civilian here on earth.

In scripture, Jn 21:18-22, Peter is somewhat concerned about John's seemingly untroubled lot in life, while Peter's life will presumably be filled with tragedy, trials, and strife. Here, John is presented as a civilian, which is not it say that John's service is unimportant but that it is simply God's will for his life at this time. When Peter asks about the roll John will play as compared to that of his own, he is quickly rebuked by Jesus to, in effect, mind his own business and follow him.

This would definitely seem to be something that satan would be responsible for by creating the kind of diversion that would take the soldier's mind off of God's purpose for their life, and place it somewhere it will be the least threatening to satan's kingdom. That's what happens when we get so concerned or attracted to the seemingly blissful lives of other believers and take our minds off what we have been called to do in preference to what others have been either called to do, or choose to do. As far as satan is concerned regarding those of us that will strike a great blow to his kingdom, we will always be a soldier. He will still continue to come at us the same way because he still considers us a threat.

Friends, it is my prayer that we will all continue to be victorious in battle, and not be distracted by the cavalier and self-centered behavior that marks the civilian. The harvest is plenty but the workers are few. Won't you join us?