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“Soldiers Of Christ Arise”

Vernon Teagarden

A story is told of an old Cherokee teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil, he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is good, he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?” The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one we feed.”

There is a war going on, not a battle between nations, but a battle nonetheless. It is a spiritual warfare between good and evil, between the forces of Satan and the children of God. It is a war for that which is more precious and valuable than anything in this world. It a war for your soul, and the battleground is your heart (mind).

I think Christians sometimes lose sight of the fact that they are in a conflict, and this causes them difficulties as individuals and as congregations. Many allow the devil to have his way with them when each of us, individually and personally, should be warring against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

The Christian soldier is not able to defend against Satan with his own knowledge or devices and must depend on God and the weapons that are divinely provided (Eph. 6:14-17). Satan is real, he does exist and he does have great power, knowledge and hate. He will stop at nothing to provoke battles within us, tempting us, trying his best to take advantage over us. We must never lose sight of the fact that he is our enemy. In this war there is only one winner. If we do not overcome Satan, he will overpower us. It is a literal struggle for spiritual life. We cannot be neutral or try to make “peace” with the devil. He is mightier than we are in many ways. He is also invisible, but always near, trying his best to work within us.

If we allow him to defeat us now, we lose in the end! Therefore: “SOLDIERS OF CHRIST ARISE AND PUT YOUR ARMOR ON; STRONG IN THE STRENGTH WHICH GOD SUPPLIES . . . THRU HIS BELOVED SON.”



Who Is Keeping This Church Alive?

Chris Reeves

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. - Revelation 3:1-3

The Apostle John wrote to the church at Sardis and said that they were “dead” spiritually. They were not completing their works for the Lord. They were not active. One sign that a person is dead is there is no activity; no brain wave activity and no heart beat activity. In the same way, a local church (group of Christians) can be spiritually dead or alive. Is this church dead or alive? If it is alive, then who is keeping it alive? That’s a good question.

The Local Church: Alive or Dead?

The local church can be spiritually alive when each member is raised to walk in newness of life. Each member needs to live in a way that he or she is “dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11). You know that the local church is alive when it is bearing fruit for the Lord (Romans 6:22), just like you know a fruit tree is alive when it is bearing fruit. The local church can be spiritually dead as we have already mentioned concerning Sardis (Revelation 3:1-2).

We obviously want to be a local church that is alive. If the local church is to stay alive, what do members need to do? Who is keeping the church alive? The members who keep the church alive are healthy, dependable, willing, generous, and united members.

The Healthy Members

Healthy members keep the church alive. They are spiritually healthy in the sound words of the gospel (2 Timothy 1:18; Titus 2:1-2). They know their Bible well.

Healthy members are spiritually healthy in their speech (Titus 2:8). What they say matches the truth of God’s word.

The Dependable Members

Dependable members keep the church alive. They can be counted on to serve God (Matthew 25:21). Dependable members can be counted on to do the Lord’s work (Acts 9:26-28; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12ff; Ephesians 4:16).

Dependable members can be counted on to be present at the worship assemblies (Hebrews 10:25).

Dependable members can be counted on to offer up meaningful worship (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11; 14).

Dependable members can be counted on to fight against the Devil (2 Timothy 2:4).

The Willing Members

Willing members keep the church alive. They are willing to take on new tasks (Acts 6:1-6). They are willing to stand with their brethren (Acts 14:20). They are willing to learn more of God’s word (2 Peter 1:5; 3:18). They are willing to stand for truth (Jude 3). They are willing to stay pure (Matthew 5:13; Philippians 2:15; James 1:27; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

The Generous Members

Generous members keep the church alive. They are generous with their contribution (2 Corinthians 9:6- 7), their time (Acts 8:14-15; 11:22-23), their talents (Acts 8:4; 13:1; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Timothy 2:2), and their possessions (Acts 2; 4).

The United Members

United members keep the church alive. They desire to be united in matters of judgment (Romans 14; Philippians 4:1-2), united in Bible doctrine (Ephesians 4:1-6), united in respect for authority (Hebrews 13:17), and united in attitude (3 John 9-10).

Who Is Keeping This Church Alive ?

Will this local church be present here in years to come? Will it be here for your children, your grandchildren, and the lost? It will be here if it stays alive. It will not be here if it dies. Do you have a genuine and personal interest in keeping this local church alive now? Let’s all do the work it takes to keep this local church alive!