

## THE NEED FOR THE ARMOUR

Eph. 6:10-20

I want to introduce you to some of the ‘co-workers’ in the New Testament accounts relating to soul-winners.

Our first ‘co-worker’ was called in the same way Peter and Andrew were called. He was also called in the same way as Mathew the tax-collector was called.

Jesus called out to him to follow Him in the seeking after souls to be won to the Kingdom. Jesus called him by name.

This man was ‘trained’ at the Master’s feet; he ate and slept with the Master; he listened to Him *preach* the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) and the Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6). He watched the Master perform miracles; he handed out the loaves and the fishes; he was in the boat with Jesus as they crossed the Sea of Galilee. He watched the great crowds flock to Jesus ... and he stood there with the Master.

He knew the Gospel ... and he himself preached it. Along with all the other disciples Jesus sent him out to preach the need to repent. This disciple was continually in the company of the other disciples, - he walked alongside the other disciples, ... and this disciple also walked along beside Jesus!

This disciple, - ‘co-worker’ with Jesus, - held the purse-strings of the disciple band; he had the privilege of sitting beside Jesus at the most important feast of the year; this disciple had a private conversation with Jesus that none of the other disciples heard.

This disciple of Jesus, - this co-worker with Jesus, - who was he? You have guessed ... Judas Iscariot. In my Quiet Time this morning I was reading notes from Warren Wiersbe, “Judas was motivated and energised by Satan (Jn. 13:2,27), for he never was a true believer in Jesus Christ. His sins had never been cleansed by the Lord (Jn. 13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean), and he had never believed and received eternal life (Jn. 6:64-71). Yet none of the other apostles had the least suspicion that Judas was a traitor. We have every reason to believe that Judas had been given the same authority as the other men and that he had preached the same message and performed the same miracles. It shows how close a person can come to God’s Kingdom and still be lost (Mt. 7:21-29).”

Peter was in Jerusalem; there came a knock on his door, and standing in front of him with a bag of money were a very respectable husband and wife. The husband begins to speak, "We have heard about our Christian brothers and sisters who have sold their belongings and laid them down at your feet (Acts 4:34,35); well, Sapphira and I have sold our land and here we are, ... we are bringing *all* the money we made from that sale. Isn't that awful good of us!" (They didn't say the first bit, or the last bit ... but it was there in the tone of their voices and on the expressions of their faces). What happened? Those two members of the Jerusalem church, - who most likely said the prayer, and definitely were baptised, blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, - a sin that is not possible for a true child of God to commit. These two had 'weeded' their way in and were a pollutant in that Jerusalem church. They weren't saved ... no matter how much they pretended and no matter how much they let on to give.

I'll take you to a 'co-worker' of Philip (Acts 8). Simon the sorcerer was what we would call nowadays a wonderful trophy of grace. He had been into the occult in a big way, but when Simon saw *the power* the followers of Christ were demonstrating he wanted it too, - v.13 tells us he '*believed also*'. But look, how he really was, v.20 *Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.* For a time, Simon was a 'co-worker' in the Gospel, along with Philip ... but he wasn't saved!

One of the 'co-workers' in the Gospel with Paul was a man called Demas. Along with Luke, Paul sent greetings to the Colossian church ... also from Demas (Col. 4:14). When Paul wrote to Philemon (v.24) he included greetings from Demas, who he described there as one of his '*fellowlabourers*'. But when Paul was writing that personal letter to Timothy he wrote (II Tim. 4:10), *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed.* Again to Timothy he wrote and mentioned others similar to Demas, I Tim. 1:18 *This charge I commit unto thee, son*

Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. Paul took a while at getting over the hurt Alexander did to him, II Tim. 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

John, - by the time he came to write the third epistle, - had become a wise old man; *he had grown up a lot since his days in Galilee*. After Pentecost it was written that Acts 4:13 when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. This same John wrote, III Jn. 9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. 11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.

I only mention these few examples by way of introduction to our study this evening ... *You never go out fighting a battle ... unaware of the enemy*. On each of the occasions I mentioned the enemy was within the camp. It is one thing facing a soldier that wears a different uniform but we find in the Lord's work of setting out to win the lost for Christ that it was the Lord's experience, - and Peter's, and Philip's, and Paul's, and John's, - that when we are involved in the work of soul-winning and travelling out of our safe 'army barracks' we always need to be aware of the enemy on all fronts, - as Jesus put it, - even the enemy in *sheep's clothing*. There was the enemy without, - the Pharisees and the religious and community leaders ... and there was also the enemy within the camp.

*The Bible says we've got to be suitably dressed for the battlefield on which souls are won for the Saviour! It is a battlefield and the devil wants to hold on to everyone of his soldiers and he wants to do as much harm as he possibly can to the army of the Lord; what then does the Bible say? Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in*

the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- \* You have got to take sides (v.10)
- \* You have got to wear the *whole* armour (v.11)
- \* You have got to know the enemy (v.12)
- \* You have got to stand (v. 13)
- \* You have got to be properly clothed in the truth and protected in God's righteousness (v.14)
- \* You have got to move in and with the Gospel (v.15)
- \* You have got to stand behind and upon your faith (v.16)
- \* You have got to wear the helmet (v.17)
- \* You have got to use the sword (v.17)
- \* You have got to be in communication with the Commander (v.18)
- \* You are a soldier in a battle! ... and soldiers fight to win ... *and win only by fighting* (vv.19,20).
- \* The enemy misses very few opportunities. When he sees an array of God's people seeking to be faithful to God's command ... he comes out on to the battlefield.
- \* It's no fancy talk or no fairy story; when the people of God are out to win the battle for souls the enemy puts up every barrier, fires every spiritual missile he can muster, and spreads his propaganda in the most convincing style.
- \* When you are truly born again of the Holy Spirit of God ... you are in the army! ... and you are in the army to fight.
- \* From the moment you are saved you are in the battle, and if you are not fighting the enemy you are not in the battle.

- \* It's not a battle to win points over doctrinal statements, or whether the Baptist church is better than any other; it is the battle for the hearts and souls of men and women, boys and girls who are heading towards the flames of hell.
- \* ... But you can't fight the battle and be successful unless you see the need for the armour, and understand the directives the Commander issues in His Word.
- \* It is not too strong a parallel to draw for if Jesus had not fought and won at Calvary, and the disciples had not continued in the battle souls would not have been won.
- \* But in the plan of God He 'conscripts' His army, - every last soldier; He equips them and trains them, He instructs them in the tactics they need to know to kill the enemy ... and He gives them the confidence He gave to the young Israelite warrior when he stood before the giant, [I Sam. 17:47 all this assembly shall know that ... the battle is the Lord's, and he will give \[the enemy\] into our hands.](#)
- \* My number in the army was 24524039, - that's my number; nobody ever had that number before me, nor never will after me. But it is not my number that is written in the Lamb's Book of Life ... *it's my name!* I'm not just a number to Christ, - I'm a person for whom He died.
- \* Yes, there is the requirement for the soldier of Christ, - engaged in seeking after souls and in the work of the Master, - to be wearing the armour that [we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil so that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.](#)
- \* ... May God bless our efforts in this incoming week and may the Holy Spirit take them and use them to glorify our wonderful Saviour!