

GOD WANTS AN ARMY

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There isn't any other love that is sufficient to bind us together in the fashion that we are to be bound. Father, we want to flow in the river of God that is life and liberty, a liberty that gives us the opportunity to present ourselves for service. It gives us the opportunity to give up our liberty unto Thee, that we might be in Thy servitude, and be slaves, as it were, unto the will of God. Not by coercion or being forced, but by the fact that we love You. We know, Father, that the terms of love are conditional on the basis of how much that we do love You, because we can't love each other unless we love You, and we can't love each other to the extent that we need to love each other, unless we really love You. So it is, Father, that we want that love that we need for You in our hearts, that we might not only demonstrate it to You, and give it unto You, but that we might also demonstrate and give it unto the world around us. We just pray for Your unction, Your anointing. We pray for Your Spirit here this morning. Father, we pray for those that have been smitten by the devil. As the devil has risen up to smite them, so we rise up against the devil. We say unto him that he shall not prevail. We say, Father, that he shall not have the last word, for we are a people destined unto eternal life. We exert, we manifest that position this morning against every device that is formed. It says no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper. So it is that we come against that prospering of evil against us. Father, we take the position, the place, the authority. We bind and rebuke, and we ask that You heal and anoint. So it is, Father, that we would present ourselves to You this day, in Jesus' Name.

I think everybody that has been to the conference this last week will testify that it was a very good conference. I think that we agree on that. Not that it wasn't without its difficulties, its trials, its tribulations. It is not that the devil wasn't there. If the devil hadn't been there, I would have been worried, because it says that as the sons of God gathered themselves together, Satan also was in their midst (Job 1:6; 2:1). So it is that we have that spirit to contend with, but that is what it is all about, isn't it? Isn't that what it is all about? Contending with the principality, with the rulers of darkness, the overshadowing enemy that has thought to usurp God's position (Ephesians 6:12), isn't that what it is all about? Taking back that place. Can you say, "Amen?" Praise the Lord! Then you are eligible for draft. If you didn't say, "Amen," maybe you can get what they call "conscientious objection." Only, it is not the Lord's conscientiousness.

Hallelujah! If you want to open your Bibles, I want to go into Romans 12, because that seems to be where the Lord is taking us. One of the overshadowing thoughts that I have had of late, especially this previous week, is one of an ARMY. I believe that God is raising up an army.

By definition, if you will look into the word *army*, I think that you will find that it was a word that was derived from the government marshalling individuals into a place of

service that they might defend as well as conquer. So, it is not a place of ease. It is not a place of vacation. It is not a place where one will sit back and look at things from a “non-involved position.” Do you know that you can’t be in the Army and be “non-involved?” Hallelujah! I suggest to any of you that think that you can, go and enlist!

I don’t know how it is now, but I know how it was when I joined the service. It was not a place where one could sit on the sidelines, so to speak. Hallelujah! God was very much aware of that in the situation with Gideon, because there were a lot of people that were in the army. They were, what you call, “conscripted.” It means that without consent, the government reached out and touched them and said, “You are going to be a part of this service.” To a large extent, Christianity has been something of that type of an environment, if you understand what I mean, because God does not want anybody to go to hell. However, God’s desire for no one to go to hell does not necessarily encompass and incorporate the totality of God’s thought when He saved your soul. Hallelujah!

In the Service, there are many different positions, divisions and jobs, however you want to say it, and there are many different levels of authority. Only those that are really dedicated, that really love what they are doing, excel and go on, and they are continually confronted with the opportunity to re-enlist or get out. They give you a term of service, you know. Mine was three years, and at the end of the three years, they said, “Do you want to re-up? Do you want to re-enlist?” I said, “Absolutely not.” As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual. We are conscripted into this position of service by virtue of the salvation that we accept at the behest of God. We are exposed to the workings of that environment. Some of us like it. Some of us do not like it. Some of us are conscripted on the basis of just not wanting to go to hell. We don’t want to go to hell. We really do not want Heaven, but hell is even less attractive. Nobody in their right mind, or out of their mind, would want to go to hell if they were really convinced of the fact that there is a hell. Nobody would. So everybody who has that perspective, really does want to get saved!

But that isn’t the whole thought of how God looks at the situation, or what He is preparing for, because He knows that down the road there is going to be a battle - a great battle. He also knows that along the way, there are going to be what the Army calls “skirmishes.” Not only “skirmishes,” but situations and circumstances that require men and women that are trained in such a manner and such a way that they will be able to accomplish what it is that God wants done. Hallelujah!

Well, in the Service, they give you two months of basic training. Oh, my goodness! Now, God has been training an army for over six thousand years. There have been many casualties. There have been many fatalities. All of those things are in the basics of the training that God is giving us, and I am very much aware of the fight that we are in. In fact, it comes before me in a vision almost every day. I see something of a battlefield in different types of circumstances. Sometimes I see it with people wounded. Sometimes I see it with people dead. Sometimes I see it in the midst of the battle, and the bombs going off, and the bullets going over your head.

I want to tell you that one of the things that really surprised me when I was in the Service was that they put you in a training situation and they used live ammunition. WHAT? Live ammunition? I’m supposed to crawl under those bullets! You have got to

be kidding, somebody could get killed!! You talk about “friendly fire”? I don’t know how close those bullets really were. They could have been up there ten feet, but when you are down there, face in the mud, crawling through the dirt and under the wire and all of that, and you hear the “ZZZAAAPPP!” you don’t have any idea how close the bullets are! That is what it sounds like as the bullet, the lead, is splitting through the air over your head. Of course, they also have charges planted in the ground. You are not near those charges, but they don’t tell you that and when they go off, it is like you want to jump from where you are all the way back to where you started. We do not look at Christianity that way!

Some of us are really kind of trying to just make it through to the end. Just trying to hang on, in some manner or some fashion, until we can walk out our time schedule and meet the Lord with some sort of comfort, some sort of confidence that we are going to be in this land of euphoria that is called Heaven. Some of us may well have that type of experience. You probably will make it into Heaven, and you probably will be very thankful that you are there. But I am aware that there is a higher calling, there is a greater election, there is something that God is pressing upon me with regard to the responsibility that I personally have and the opportunity that God is giving me.

You know, I really can’t preach about you, because I really don’t know what your situation is. However, it seems like every time I preach about me I get into trouble, because when I begin to tell a person about something that God is dealing with me about, it seems it is quite apropos to their situation. Then, because they don’t like to hear it, that person takes it and twists and turns it and then uses it against me. I guess that is one of the things that I have to live with. I am by no means exalting myself, or putting myself in a place that would exalt me above anybody else. *I know what this fellow is made of.* Do you know that God has a way of keeping me humble? Anytime my balloon gets over two-and-a-half inches He pops it. So, I have an understanding with regard to that.

Quite frankly, I don’t have anything else to give you other than what God speaks to me by the Word and how it has related to my own life. The fact is that He has called me, put me here, and given me what He has given me and the demand that He puts upon me is that I share it with you! It would be very easy for me to sit back there - well, I say very easy, sometimes it is not as easy as it is at other times - to sit back there, in my chair, and let someone else carry the burden, carry the responsibility. But the fact of the matter is, here I am and here you are. So, there is something in the heart of God that He is laying upon me to give to you.

I remember that quite some time ago, I had a dream. God has been bringing this dream back to me again and again and again, and in certain situations it comes up before me very vividly. In this dream, I had been in a big battle. It was a massive battle and we had won. I was almost utterly, totally exhausted. I had this big, huge sword. As I think about it, I don’t know how in the world I would have ever wielded or moved this sword, it was so huge. I had my arms up over the cross-member of the handle (hilt), and I was so utterly exhausted that I was leaning upon the sword. As I was leaning there, I was looking around the area in which we had been fighting. We had WON, but I was too tired to be dancing or jubilant. Inside of me there was a joy that we had won - but it was tempered with a sorrow. It was tempered with a grief which I have never understood. You would think that he who died, died in the Lord. You would think, “Well, praise the

Lord! They are with God.” but there was something of a sadness in my soul as I surveyed the carnage around me. Many were dead on both sides. As I looked out, I could recognize certain individuals - not by name, or face, or figure, but by the fact that I knew that they were my comrades in arms. Maybe it was by the way they were dressed, I don't know. Nevertheless, many of them were slain, and there was something of a sadness, almost like David when he heard the news of Jonathan being slain. It was much like the situation with Brother Hubert's wife. The scripture that came to me was of a lament, and a sense of sorrow in David's soul over his loss of Jonathan. As he began to meditate upon the fact, not only of Saul, but of Jonathan's death, I think David mourned really more for the sake of Jonathan than Saul. Yet David knew of the unction, the anointing that was upon Saul's life, and it was on the basis of that unction and that anointing and that divine selection and calling of God that there was something of a deep, deep sorrow within his soul. Hallelujah!

I am not a person that is given to weeping, but I have had something of a spirit of weeping that has been on me for many, many months. Something can happen, or somebody does something, or somebody moves in a certain way and something down in my soul stirs, and I've got to fight it, because sometimes when it happens it can be very embarrassing to me. You don't want people to think that you are some sort of sissy or wimp, or wimp out and begin to see the tears running down your face. Oftentimes I have to get away by myself in order to get hold of myself and to get control of my emotions.

I really believe that it has something to do with where we are, what we are involved in, and the things that are going on. It has to do with the concern and the care that God has for the Body, and the destruction that is coming upon the face of the earth, and that we do not seem to be in a place of cognizant awareness that there is tragedy up ahead. There is not only victory, but there is tragedy. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

There is something that happens to soldiers in battle. There is a camaraderie and a brotherhood. When they communicate with each other and come back together after finishing their time in the military, there is something that flows between them. There is a strengthening, and a camaraderie and a brotherhood, because they survived in the thing together and they did what was appointed unto them to do. We don't readily see it as much in the natural, as we would in that type of army/war situation.

I have had the occasion, in the last couple of weeks or so, to see some little segments of the History Channel. They have been showing the invasions of Guam and those little islands around Japan. They began to show the loss of lives, the blood, the guts, the tears, and all of the things that were going on for those men to do what they did so that you and I might have what we have today. You know, many of those who died did not realize the totality of what they were fighting for, but there was something of an attitude that they had with regard to each other. I can guarantee you, when some of those men that fought their way up that hill and made it, there was something that was welded, something of a merging of their souls together that would endure the elapsing of time and distance. I'm telling you all of this because I believe that you and I are coming into such a situation. I believe that the church, with regard to humanity and the things of God and the things of the world as far as Satan is concerned, is coming into an aggravated situation. Hallelujah!

There are many different levels of support, as well as confrontation. Sometimes the support at the back of the lines find themselves, because of the lack of resistance, a little less mindful of the jeopardy of the situation. Sometimes we think that it is more abstract and less of a reality because of the spiritualness of the circumstance. I use the word *abstract* for the spiritual part, because as things go on as they have always gone in your place of business or home, it seems as if it is the only reality with which we have to deal. I mean that you are not aware that out there on the front lines someone is lobbing mortar shells and bullets are flying. At least, we are not aware until they hit in our vicinity.

Caesar had this concept, and it came from the devil. It is to divide and conquer. If you can divide, you can conquer. He does it in the home. He does it in the church. He does it in the political arena. My goodness. Hallelujah! He does it all around you - in your job, in the things that you are involved with, in the people that you know. It is always working - divide and conquer. Divide and conquer! He works to bring some sort of wedge, some sort of intervention, some sort of conflict, some sort of contention by which two parties cannot come into an agreement.

There were many different people on the battlefield in World War II who had a viewpoint that was probably different than their commander's. That did not keep them from having to do what they had to do. WHY? Because there was an authority over them that was greater than what they perceived or didn't perceive, what they thought or didn't think. There was something of a greater demand, commitment or position of responsibility, than the position of the individual right or space in which they existed.

Can you imagine that? A man dying for you and me so that we could have liberty and right of choice - by having no choice but to die? Because, let me tell you something, if you didn't do what you were supposed to do, when you were told to do it, it was considered a treasonous act. Isn't that right? It was a shootable offense. They didn't mess around with you. *They did not mess around with you.* They brought you in. They put your peers, the officers in charge, in front of you and they gave you a trial. If you were found guilty, they didn't put you on kitchen duty for two weeks. They took you out and they shot you. There is something very Biblical about that, don't you think? I think that there is something very Biblical about that. Now, they have the ACLU - the Civil Rights Union, and all these other people that rise up and do all kinds of things and have law suits and are splashed all over the TV. If that kind of punishment happened now, they would be crying impeachment and Grand Jury investigations. But back then, they did what they needed to do. They took you out and they shot you. BANG! How about that? Where is your appeal? I think there is something very Biblical about it.

God said there were certain offenses that a person could commit that were what? Stone-able offenses! Hallelujah! Now, you can talk to me about the grace and the mercy of God and all of that. That is all well and good. We don't take people out here and stone them. That is not our position or our responsibility, but I want to tell you something. There are principles, rules in the Spirit, and when you go against them, there are consequences.

I don't think that God has changed His mind, do you? I don't think that the God of the New Testament is any different than the God of the Old Testament. Do you? Isn't

there something of a severity of God? The Bible says that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God (Hebrews 10:31). If it were not so, then why does the Bible talk about the wrath of God? Doesn't it talk about the wrath of God in the New Testament, and especially in Revelation? Doesn't it? Maybe I'm getting another book all mixed up with it. It seems to me that God is talking about the wrath of God. What about the scripture that we sing? It says, I love righteousness and I hate wickedness (Psalm 45:7, Hebrews 1:9). Now, do you think that the word *hate* in the Hebrew (Old Testament) is different than the word *hate* in the Greek (New Testament)? You know, Jesus brought forth a definition of that word. He said, "He that hateth his brother is guilty of murder," (I John 3:15) and yet, God said, "I hate wickedness." That means that there is an attitude in God, where God works in a manner to eliminate or eradicate that position of wickedness. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

This Word that we teach in regard to sonship and the calling and the election that is for an elect people - oh boy! I'm not saying that we are it! Come on! I don't know that we have ever, ever, really ever given that impression. But it seems to be that there are some that think that we are saying, "We are IT." I'm not saying that! God is immense, God is great, but whoever has this Word of sonship is called, is elected! There is something very special about them. There is something very special in the heart of God about them. God is doing whatever He can do to get them to the position that He wants them to be so that they might fulfill the will of God!

Unfortunately, not everybody makes it through Boot Camp. Hallelujah! Some of those that didn't do so well in boot camp, usually and quite often are the first to lose their position, lose their place by doing something foolish. When somebody said, "Jump!" they decided that they weren't going to jump. When somebody said, "Run," they walked, when somebody said, "Stay," they left.

When I was in Boot Camp, you didn't have any rights. You were not considered an individual. Your position of personal preference wasn't even considered. Your individual personality was something that was a detriment to the will and the thought of the whole. When they said, "Jump," you jumped. It wasn't a question of, "Where? How? When? Who? How high?" You just jumped, and hoped that you jumped the right direction! And there were consequences if you didn't jump.

I remember one night when we were out. They had woken us up at two o'clock in the morning. We had put on full pack, it was about forty pounds, and that M-1 rifle, which they don't have any more, but it weighed nine-and-a-half pounds. By the end of the march, you thought it weighed twenty-five-and-a-half pounds, and you thought that pack weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds. I remember that there was no room for excuses or for being excused. What they wanted was obedience and blind obedience at that. You were a part of the team. This was an exercise that the team was going to do. Therefore, you had to fulfill your part.

We had this drill sergeant, and he was a very black man, which, to me, at the time, made him all the more intimidating. He had been in World War II. He had been in the Korean Conflict. They called him something like "the Fox." His eyes were always bloodshot. It wasn't that he was a drinker or anything. The white around his eyes was just always red, red, red, and it always reminded us of the devil. I wonder how that was?

His name was Sergeant Sanford. Oh, my goodness. You know, on his wall in his office, he had all of these war scenes with his buddies and his comrades. So you had this deep, I won't say respect, but boy, you were afraid of this guy.

I remember one night they called us out and we were marching along. I had this cough and I was trying to do everything that I possibly could to keep from coughing, because I knew "he" wouldn't like it. I was in the middle of the ranks, you understand. We were in a kind of loose formation in a squad going down this road. There were several men on this side of me. There were several men on the other side of me. There were several men in front of me. There were several men behind me. We were not all that far apart, you understand, maybe a couple of feet keeping us in touch with each other. We were marching along and I was trying to suppress this cough. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, this guy (The Fox) was standing over my shoulder, and he said, "Asbill, that cough is going to get you killed one day!" I don't know where he came from. He was like the Holy Ghost. I don't know how he got there and nobody else knew he got there and you know something, I didn't know when he left!

The service that God has, we don't see it, we don't feel it, we don't imagine it. We are comfortable. We can eat when we want to eat in the morning. We can get out of our beds that are nice and warm when we want to; we have the temperature set at a certain temperature. For some of us the temperatures may be colder than others, but nevertheless, there are no icicles dripping off of your fixtures. Hallelujah! We get up at a certain time, and we do not have the perception of the thing that we are involved in. We go to work at a certain time. We expect a check at a certain time, and if we don't get that check, we get upset. Don't we? Then we go down to find out what the problem is. We don't look at our situation as a combat situation. We don't look at our situation as a situation that is detrimental to our position, to our place in the Spirit, that there can be casualties because of our lack. A casualty around us or we ourselves can become a casualty, or even a fatality. Hallelujah!

If you had any other gospel or just any segment of the gospel, other than that which you have received, then you could not be held accountable. But the fact of the matter is, there is a Word that you and I have heard, (at least, I hope you have heard it) about the position and the calling of our election. Whether you believe the world is coming to an end or not really has nothing to do with it, because even the heathen, world economists, world politicians, know that we are living in perilous times. I see it all the time: in news articles that I read, in lectures that are given by commentators. And not only that, but - I think I mentioned it before, but I'll mention it again, because it is really something quite astounding to me - many news commentators are now saying that we are in World War III. Has anybody heard that besides me? They are saying that we are in World War III! And everybody knows that somebody somewhere is going to set off an atom bomb.

You think a man that can strap a bomb to his son or his daughter, teach that son or daughter to go into a place where other innocent people are living and pull the string, and blow themselves and everybody else up without a thought wouldn't set off an atom bomb? Where is human compassion, where is the restraint? What kind of sense or position of responsibility does that demonstrate? What kind of thought do they have with

regard to life in general? Do they have any? Absolutely not, none at all. Why? Because God has been eradicated from their consciousness.

Maybe you don't see the same things that I see. Maybe you don't read what I read. I'm not talking about things that I've seen in the Spirit. Right now they are saying that there are at least two, maybe three, suitcase bombs, nuclear armaments, in the United States. That is what they are saying. I didn't say it! I didn't say it! I didn't prophesy it. I heard it in many different places in the news that is being given out in the political arena, on the major news networks. It is on the internet that there are two, possibly three nuclear bombs. And do you know what they are doing? They are using the heat searching, infrared satellite, especially around the capitol. Have any of you read that article? Around mosques, but especially in the Washington D.C. area, they are scrutinizing with this radiation detecting technology to determine whether or not they can find some nuclear device in that arena. Brethren, here is another thought. It is not a question of *if*, it is a question of *when*. How many of you have heard that? They are saying that it is a question of *when*.

What do you think all of this says with regard to the time we are living in and the Word that we have received? Now, you can hope to go home to be with the Lord before any of this happens. Praise the Lord! I don't have any qualms or quibbles with you if that is your desire. Praise the Lord! BUT WHAT IF - what if you are called? What if you are elected? What if your responsibility is not to think about how you would like to live your life, and how you would like to marry, and how you would like to grow up and have fun and be happy? WHAT IF, in all of that, your calling, your election, is to stop the thing that is supposed to happen? The Bible says that there IS a people. Are you aware of that? Are you aware of the thought, that there IS a people? I suggest that if you are not aware of that thought that you go into Joel. Go into Joel and begin to read the story about God's army.

How many of you know that when Joel chapter 2 speaks about God's army, that it is talking about an end-time people? Are you aware of that? Are you in agreement with me? Do you believe that God has a people? Okay! How about Armageddon? Do you think that's a spiritual fight in the spiritual realm? Well, yes, it is, but do you think that is the only thing that it is talking about? What do you think it is talking about? It is devil people fighting God people. Is that not a battle? Is that not a fight? Is that not a place of natural conflict as well as spiritual? Hallelujah! We, for the most part, do not necessarily have that thought. Oh my. Yet it is this very thought, the very intent of God that is working in this realm we call time. Now, the devil is going to do whatever he can do to make you go AWOL. You really don't have to go somewhere to be AWOL. You just have to think something other than what is really pertinent with regard to the end-time, the place that you are in, and the Word that God has delivered to your soul. That, brethren, is exactly what the devil did to Eve.

Some of you have some plans that stretch out there for years in front of you. Quite frankly, I don't believe we have years. I believe that you need to go to God to find out whether or not that is indeed the fact, because if it is not the fact, then whatever it is we are expending our efforts in concerning those issues is wasted energy. It is not being funneled or channeled into the thing that God wants to have done so that you and I are in the place that we need to be. I am speaking to you out of Romans chapter 12 and the first

verse. It says, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God...* The mercies of God, that God continually stretches out His hand.

How can I say this without saying the wrong thing? God likens life and living as a cup, and there is a cup of wickedness that the Bible speaks about in reference to humanity and the place of its position and pre-eminence, a place where it comes to fullness. He talks about that cup as being a cup of iniquity. If I am not mistaken, in other places He, God, refers to it as the abomination of desolation. God's attitude to the cup when it is half full is different than when the cup is full. When the cup of wickedness is full, what is God's response? "It's time to do something!" Man's cup, you can look back through history, Biblical history, and see when the cup was full, back in Genesis. It says that the wickedness of man came up before the Lord to such a degree, to such an extent, that God said, "It's time for Me to do something!" (Genesis 6:5).

Now, I ask you, did that mean that God did not love everyone, except for Noah? We have this kind of wishy-washy understanding of the love of God. Hebrews tries to define it for us. It says God purges His sons (Hebrews 12:6-7). Purges - now, come on - that is not my word. I didn't write it. If you don't think that it means what it says, I suggest you look it up in the Greek. Look it up! It means "to chastise severely." Look at the scripture found in Malachi chapter 3. Refiner's fire and fullers' soap is no light affliction (Malachi 3:2).

If that isn't enough for you, go into John. Those whom God loves, what does He do? He prunes. John 15 says that He prunes (John 15:1-2). Have you ever watched a pruner prune a tree? Have you? Have you ever watched a pruner that really knows what they are doing prune a tree? You would think that they had killed it. Well, you can go right out here in front of the building and look. I got through pruning those trees not too long ago. There was a big pile of brush! But God says, "I prune." "I prune." Sometimes I am out there with those shears and I am cutting away and I am thinking, "My goodness. Well, I hope this tree makes it." Do you know, they always seem to make it? How about one of those big standards there, and you start sawing away to cut it off? But you are not sawing it off just because you want to saw it off. You are doing it because the way that it is doesn't meet with your vision as to what the tree should be. You are purging it; you are pruning it, so that it might do what? So that it might produce more fruit, and because it must fit the form that you have in your mind as to what it should be. Do you know that if you don't prune a peach tree the way that a peach tree is supposed to be pruned, it will not produce the fruit for you that it would produce if you had pruned it like you were supposed to prune it? Did you know that? It won't produce much fruit. It won't produce as much fruit as it would have had you done what you were supposed to have done in the beginning. Hallelujah!

You know, pruning is a very interesting topic and I like it. I have learned a lot about pruning. There are certain trees that you prune certain ways, and certain trees that you prune other ways, depending on what you want the tree to do. Hallelujah! A peach tree is pruned so that all the fruit grows down. Have you ever looked at the top of one of these trees and there is one of these big ugly knobs at the top of the limb? The reason that they can do that is because every year a peach tree will always produce fruitwood - *wood that makes fruit*. Not all wood makes fruit. Some of the wood produces leaves and other things. So, you prune a peach tree differently than you would an almond tree. An

almond tree doesn't reproduce wood that produces fruit. Hallelujah! So, you have to be careful how you prune the almond tree. With a peach tree, you can just go in there and chop off the top of it, and it will produce for you. An almond tree, you want to shape in a certain way, you want it to be able to get a certain amount of light and all of those things that are pertinent to growth and development. But you have to be careful not to cut off those branches that produce the almond, the fruit. If you did, then all you would have is a nice looking almond tree but nothing to pay for it. The Bible says that the husbandman wants the fruit (James 5:7).

I think an almond orchard looks much prettier than a peach orchard. I think a peach orchard looks much prettier than a pear orchard. Have you ever watched them prune pears? They go in there with these buzz-saws. They go out with these huge buzz-saws that extend over the top of the trees. They just drive down the row and cut the tops off of the trees, because they don't want to have to use ladders to pick the fruit, and they know that all the fruit will be produced on the lower boughs. That is what they do. Have you ever gone and looked at an orchard? I go and look at an apple orchard when it is pruned right, and I'm almost embarrassed because everything is so exposed. Everything is so exposed and chopped off. Everything is chopped off and exposed. Everything is pruned differently, so it depends what kind of tree you are pruning, but we are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord (Isaiah 61:3).

You know, we lived in an area of the central valley that had hard-pan for probably three or four feet down. So, when Dad would go in to plant a new area with almond trees, he first went in with a backhoe. It was very expensive, but Dad did it, because he knew that at the end of the day those trees would do a whole lot better than what they would if you just dug a little two foot hole, stuck it in there and tamped the dirt down. He would go in with a backhoe. He would go in, dig down and he would always say, "Now, be sure that you punch through the hard-pan." It sometimes varied in the different places that you were at. Some of it was at one foot. Some of it was at three feet. Sometimes it was down as far as five feet, but Dad would say, "Go down, break through the hard-pan." So the guy would go out there with the backhoe. He would dig down, dig down, dig down, acres and acres, day after day. He would dig it down, fill it up, dig it down and fill it up.

That sounds like the Army. If you don't think they made us dig holes, you are mistaken. They did. We dug big holes, and they would just say, "Keep digging." So we just kept digging. You didn't stop digging. You would dig and throw the dirt and the other guy would get the dirt and throw it out of the hole because you would be so deep that you couldn't throw it out of the hole. You just kept digging. You didn't stop digging. You might say, "Can I stop now?" That was a sure sign that you would be working another two or three hours. You just did what you were told to do. Believe you me, you didn't do it with a bad attitude! If you got an attitude, everybody else paid for your attitude. Let me tell you something. You didn't get an attitude very often, because you were not living with Christian people. You were not living with forgiving people. The next night when they were to forgive you and say, "That is all right, don't do it again," you were more apt to have a blanket party given to you so you didn't argue. Whenever you make the platoon run for two hours straight with no break because you had a bad attitude – what do you think the attitude of the people around you is going to be

with regard to you? Not very good! So you did everything that you could to keep smiling. Oh, hallelujah!

You know, I am in airports a lot and I travel around a lot. Sometimes we have a lot of time to sit while we are on airplanes, so I kind of watch people, you know. It is no different when I am in service sometimes. Not too long ago, while I was in a particular place, I was noticing the musicians' faces during the praise, while they were moving in the Spirit, and the Spirit was moving. Now, they were either in deep spiritual concentration, or in supreme agony. Maybe it was both. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt, maybe the Spirit of conviction was working so mightily in their circumstance that all they could do was grimace. I mean serious, somber. It just kind of made you want to squint your eyes and grit your teeth when you were watching them. We were singing about the joy of the Lord, being victorious in Jesus, and moving on in God. We were singing about all those good things, and yet there was this look of pain and uncomfortableness that was on the faces of the musicians - or else there was just nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing at all. No expression, the face was blank. It makes you want to get up and try to make everybody smile.

There should be some thought or something about our position, our place of service, and there should be something of an expression that is on our faces to give evidence to the joy that is in our hearts, especially with regard to our calling and the election. Not a grimace! It is not just the musicians. Please, I'm not picking on them. At least, I don't think that I am. It is just that there is kind of that attitude that is in the midst of the congregation. It is like this morning in the singing of the song, (it was not this morning that I was talking about) "Our God's a God for Whom Nothing is Too Difficult." That is kind of a shouting song, or at least, that is the sense that I have in the Spirit. It is a rallying song. Don't you understand what I am saying? "MY God." I'm talking to you about "MY God." "My God is a God for whom nothing is impossible! Nothing is too difficult! He can outshine EVERYTHING!" It is like, "Well, my Dad can do anything!" Have you ever heard two children talk about their mom or their dad? You know, "My dad can do ANYTHING! He is strong and he is vibrant and he loves me!" There is just something about the relationship that a parent and a child have. If the relationship is a good, solid relationship, as the son or the daughter begins to talk about that relationship with something of an effervescence in their life and a joy that is in their heart, there is something that is demonstrated in the face and the voice of the one that is speaking when they begin to speak about this individual that they call "Father."

"MY GOD IS A GOD THAT CAN DO ANYTHING." Do we really believe that? Do we really have that fact established within our soul? If we don't believe it, we need to get before the Lord. Now, I'm not talking to you to condemn you, or to bring you into a place of depression. What I am hoping is that I will encourage you to examine your position, examine your relationship. Examine what Word it is that you and I are perceiving and following after. If you don't believe that it is the Word of the Lord, then it is time for you to do something else.

Now, I didn't tell you to get out and leave. I didn't say that. What I said is that you have to know what it is that you believe! Do you really believe it? Do you really believe it? If you really believe it, what is the consequence for not doing what you are supposed to do? Because, quite frankly, it is the same as being in the Army. We are

inducted in the army, in the army of God. Don't we have a song about the army of God? "We are in the army of God." My goodness, when the bullets start flying, we want to be in the choir, and not in the army. We want to be in the support company and not on the front lines. Sometimes the support becomes the front lines. Because, you see, the enemy is not bound by the Geneva Convention. Doesn't it always amaze you how they enforce the Geneva Convention on the United States, but any other country, the principality or power seems to be absolved from that position, from that place of responsibility? I find it ironic. Everything that we are being accused of is what they do. Tell me, what kind of justice is that? There is no justice, because the devil doesn't have any boundaries. He is prince of this world. What justice can you expect from a devil?

That means he's not only prince of Afghanistan. He is not only prince of Iraq. He is not only prince of Iran. "Oh, that's the devil's country." Oh no! He is prince over the power of the air wherever you are from. Dubuque, Platteville - he is prince of Platteville. It is all the same devil. *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience* (Ephesians 2:2).

Now, let me ask you something. Do you think that his intention or his desire - devil, I am talking about - is going to be any different for you in the locality in which you have been planted, than if you were in Iraq? Oh boy, let me tell you, let the bombs go off in America; then, after the smoke clears, see who is still standing and protesting - if you can find them, because there is a spirit of cowardice over the land, much to our shame. It is much to our shame, because of our position as a people, the place that we have, "one nation under God." God help us. There is a spirit of cowardice that is upon the land, and it is not only over the land, but it is upon the church! The church has lost the tenacity and the position to stand up and to say, "Enough is enough!" In fact, they are going to put those who insist on being righteous in jail. They are going to put all of them in jail and into wards.

It is 2006. Just leave the church out of it and look at the political arena. Given the reality of the circumstances politically, geographically, and the fanaticism that is in the world, how much time do you think that we have for peace and safety? How much time? Do you think that they will never breach our borders? Forget it! They have already breached our borders.

One report that I read said that they had been infiltrating the United States for the last fifteen years. Another different source that I have says that the reason why they are waiting is that they do not want failure, on the basis of the 9/11 success. They want a situation... As a matter of fact, this one guy was saying that that is one of the reasons why they will not use airplanes again (whether they do or not, I don't know) because of all of the implementing of the security and stuff. Maybe that is a lie, I don't know. Given the facts, they want some sort of "grand finale;" they want some sort of success quotient or ratio with the amount of destruction that they can impose and the number of people that they can kill. And they are not concerned about their own. What kind of mentality are we dealing with? They are not concerned about their own. How are they going to be concerned about you or your children? How, if they are not really concerned about their own?

The reality of the situation is that you are coming face to face with a diabolical mentality. Now, I am not ethnic pointing, please, because there are many in the United States who are not of that ethnic origin, who have the same capability, and the same potentiality. Look at the gangs, and look at the high crime, whatever you call it. The Mafia, and things of that nature, look at it. They have a cause, they have a purpose, they have a position, and they will expend anything and everything in order to assert that position of pre-eminence. We are talking about the personification of the anti-Christ spirit. We are living in the day of anti-Christ.

I don't know what you read in the news, but I know what I read in the news, and I read anti-Christ. I can listen to commentators and I can listen to lecturers, I can read articles and all of the different things pertaining to the times and the places that we live in, and what I read is "anti-Christ:" anti-Christian.

Now, that doesn't mean that we get out and protest about the unfairness of the situation. What you and I have to do is wake up to the reality of what it is that God has called us to. There is a reason why God gave you a Word, whether it has been one year, two years, twenty years, thirty years, or fifty years. God is giving a Word concerning the fact that there are people that God wants to induct into His army, not on the basis of coercion, not on the basis of His wanting us, but on the basis of us saying, "I WANT TO!"

I did not wait to be drafted, but, of course, my situation was not such that I could necessarily have waited. It was just about the only thing left for me to do. I had no other place to go. My life was a mess. Everything was falling apart, so I just decided to join the Army. Oh boy! Was I ever asleep! But I woke up very quickly! Because, quite frankly, I didn't think that they would let me in. I had a physical disability that should have disqualified me from service. I kind of thought that they would probably find that and then I could say, "Well, I tried, but they wouldn't take me!" I didn't count on God, because they took me anyway. They took me anyway.

We don't look at our situation the way that we should, the way that we need to look at it. I want to tell you something. They gave me a pair of boots that were too big for me. I tried to get them changed, and they said, "It's all right. You have to live with it." Have you ever walked in a pair of boots that were too big for you? I remember putting on double socks. I always put on double socks to try to make them fit. I stuffed paper in the toe. But even that wears out when you are walking twenty miles. I had worn this big blister on the back of my heel, about twelve miles into the march, but I was determined to finish the march. It got so to the point that it broke and then it re-blistered and it broke and it was bleeding in my boot. My squad leader went to the sergeant and talked to him about it. Well, they got a truck and they put some more of the misfits or the drop-outs on it to transport them back to the base. You know, I was feeling very bad about the whole thing. When we got back to the barracks, do you think they gave me consideration or words of commendation? We had a master sergeant, the guy with the walker and the star. Oh, my goodness. That guy chewed me up one side and down the other. I mean, he just literally chewed me to pieces, telling me that it was all my fault, that I didn't change my socks. Well, I did change my socks, but I certainly was not going to argue with THE MAN! Well, all of these things are unfair, unjust in this type of an environment, but yet there is something of a requirement that is put on us with regard to

our position, our place of service, that is our responsibility and there is an accountability that is exacted because of it. There has to be something in us, there has to be something of the "I WANT TO SERVE!" Hallelujah!

First there was a division down there with Gideon's army of those that were fearful and afraid (Judges 7:3). Let them pack their things and go home. Oh boy! Hallelujah! There were some of them that just didn't have what it takes. God didn't want them there. You wouldn't want them there beside you in the foxhole. You wouldn't want them there in the trench. Hallelujah! Can you imagine what it would be like? You have three guys there in the hole, and the bullets are going off around you, and the bombs are going off and the word comes, "Go - press forward!" You look to the left, and your buddy is gone. You look to the right and you are there all by yourself and you have to go anyway. But the support, the personality that you were deriving some means of comfort and consideration from, has deserted their position of responsibility. It was giving you something of a feeling of camaraderie and a strength to go forth. IT IS NOT JUST SOMETHING THAT ALL COMES DOWN FROM GOD! Because God gives you something that I won't have. In my time of need, you can give me what God gave you in order that God might strengthen me to do what we need to do TOGETHER! You know, I may get shot, the one on the left may get shot, the one on the right may get shot. One of us may not make it through, but I'm telling you, there is something of a requirement that is upon me to perform and to do to the best of my ability in order to fulfill the will of God. What I cannot do, God comes in and does for me. Maybe I'm more interested in a pass to Paris [than fighting in the foxhole]. We were in a July conference in this building. I had a vision and what I saw came in through that window (South) and went out that way (North). It came through this wall and went out through that wall. I saw a hearse that was trimmed in gold with six white horses pulling it, and it went across the podium, right across the stage, and right out the door. That was about four or five years ago, three years ago. That is not the only Word that we have had that the enemy was going to penetrate our ranks, and that there were going to be those that were going to be hurt, maimed, or killed.

Somebody said something about God removing joints - I don't know. But what I do know is that since that time, there have been a number of casualties, as well as fatalities, in the Body. I don't know if you stop to think about the violence. There is something about the violence of all of it.

We are talking about sons of God. We are talking about the overcomer church. Just recently, coming back from the conference in Atlanta - just ask Peter about the car that the Chattics and the Effions were in. They (the rescue personnel) had to cut them out of the car. Violence! It is not about going to bed at night and going home to be with the Lord. Not some sort of extended illness by which one is fighting a good fight and expires, and goes on to be with the Lord. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT **VIOLENCE!!!** Like napalm or a grenade going off in your foxhole. Or pushing up through the front line and getting mowed down with a machine gun. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT **VIOLENCE!** Just because it doesn't happen to you, you think that it doesn't seem to be something that is relevant.

Brethren, the church needs to wake up!!!! When we come to God and He says, "to present your body a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1), what do you think He is talking

about? Now, you can insist on your own way. You can. You can insist on your own way, but I'm telling you, it will disqualify you! IT WILL DISQUALIFY YOU if your desire is nothing more than just making it into Heaven. I'm not saying you are not going to Heaven. That is not mine to determine or ascertain. What I do know is that there is a spiritual principle of working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). What I do know is that you have to work it out in accordance to the Word that you are listening to and embracing. I am not going to be judged as a Presbyterian. I'm not going to be judged as a Baptist. Do you hear me? I'm not going to be judged as a Pentecostal. I am not going to be judged on the basis of the knowledge that they possess or don't possess. *I am going to be judged on the basis of the Word that has been given to me.* I am going to be judged on the basis of what I do with what I have been given. "To whom much is given, much is required," (Luke 12:48). You may say, "I don't want it." Well, I'm sorry, you heard it! It is your responsibility to do something with it, and your attitude needs to be adjusted with regard to the thing that happens because we do what God wants us to do.

One more thing I found out in the service is that, if you do well, they like you to do it again. They may not like you personally. There may be some sort of personality conflict. But do you know what? They know that you will do it, and that you will do it to the very best of your ability. And unfortunately for you, you are always getting volunteered. They said when I went into the service, "Never volunteer!"

I want to be like David's mighty men. I am not satisfied with just standing back in the background. My attitude has to be, "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). I don't want to just be on the peripheral, hoping that maybe I might have the opportunity to expend or to show my worth. I think that there was something very special about those men. They were always stepping forth to prove their worth.

David said, "Oh, my soul thirsteth for a cup of water from the well of Bethlehem," (II Samuel 23:15, I Chronicles 11:17). My goodness. They heard him. There wasn't, "Any volunteers here?" They heard him, so they picked up their swords and they sneaked out. Hmm? We would probably at least have had somebody in the band playing Auld Lang Syne as we marched out into the dark. "Oh yeah, we'll see you guys later." But they sneaked away in the dead of the night. I'd almost like to have been back there, you know. I'll bet those guys just kind of looked at each other and made a silent commitment to do something about David's desire.

What do you think David thought about those men? Where do you think he put those men? I know where I'd put them. One right here (on my right) and one right here (on my left), and another one right here (behind me). Or at least, that is what I would have done. I would have surrounded myself with them because they could do anything and everything. If they would go just for a glass of water, then there was not anything they would not have done for their Lord and King. Oh, my God. Can you imagine?

I suppose that they understood the thing that David did. Was there something of a spirit of indignance? "We risked our lives and all you are doing is pouring it out on the ground!" NO! I don't think so! I think they understood. If they didn't understand, whatever the King did was okay with them. He was their King. He was their leader. Where is that kind of virtue? Where is that kind of integrity? Where is that position, that

place, that we could have such an attitude toward our KING as well as toward each other?

We are in a war, brethren - and it is a “no quarter” war as far as the devil is concerned. Your position, if it is a position, of laxativity, tolerance, compromise, or whatever else that doesn’t measure up to the quality of expectation that He has, will not attain for you or me the thing that we really would like to have and that is available.

Paul therefore said, Romans 12:1, ***I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy... holy...acceptable...*** Not by your sight, not on your terms, not by your reasoning, not by your perception. The Bible has an outline as to what it is that God expects. ***...holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

God is looking for volunteers. Will you be one of those that says, “Here I am, Lord! Send me!”? God bless you!

Stacy Asbill:

If I could just share something real quick. I’ve been so blessed this morning. I want to bear witness to the Word that we heard, because I’ve been studying Romans 12:1 the past couple of days. There is just one thought that I want to share with you.

Romans 12:1, ***I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.***

That phrase has actually been coming to me for weeks: “your reasonable service.” If you look up the word *reasonable* in the Greek, it says *logikos*, which means logical - maybe not logical to us, but logical to God. And the verse that came to me was, ***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD*** (Isaiah 55:8).

There is a thought that God has concerning us. I looked up the word *reasonable* in the Webster’s, and it means “not excessive.” Sometimes in my life, I ask God, “God, You are stretching me too far. I can’t do this. Why am I in this place?” And He says, “It is not excessive.” I might think at times that it is excessive, but it is not. In His eyes, He has a plan for us, and He puts us in these circumstances, and He says, “I have given you all that you need,” that we could present our bodies a living sacrifice. Amen.