

# The Battle Waged and Won for His Church

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**Bible Text:** Deuteronomy 20:1-4

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## Grace Particular Baptist Church

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Let us pray.

*Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, we thank thee, Lord, for the preservation of thy people this day, the preservation of this place, the preservation of the freedom to come here today, Lord. But, Lord, we know that it is all by thee. Lord, may you give us hearts of thankfulness this morning. May you give us hearts that are tender to thy Word and may thy Spirit, oh Lord, may thy Spirit instruct us in the things of thy sight. May each instruct us in the things of thee and, Lord, may your triune name be glorified this day. Bless this day, Lord, for thy name's sake. And, Lord, may you bless this hour. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*

Well, here we are again. The longer I live in this life the more I start to understand what the preacher said in Ecclesiastes. There is nothing new under the sun. Each day there seems to be a struggle of that three headed enemy that we talked so much lately about, our struggle against Satan, our struggle against the world and our struggle against self, the flesh. And I tell you. It is truly a blessing that the Lord preserves this place. And I am not talking about the four walls that are around us. I am talking about the group of believers that are here. I am talking about how the Lord has kept a people and kept a freedom for us to come here today and to worship him if he be willing in spirit and in truth.

It seems as though every day life just seems to get harder sometimes. But, see, today we wrestle with those three enemies. Paul told us this in Ephesians 6:12 when he said:

“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.”<sup>1</sup>

And how true that is. For, see, when we wake up tomorrow we are going to struggle with these three enemies. Tuesday is going to come. Tuesday is supposedly an important day in this nation, because they believe they will elect someone. And do you know what? It

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 6:12.

doesn't matter who the Lord has elected. Whichever one is pronounced the winner, when we wake up on Wednesday we are going to struggle with the same three enemies.

And, you know, it doesn't matter if the one that we have been praying for wins, because those three enemies will still be there. And that same preacher in Ecclesiastes told us something about the day of prosperity in 7:14. He told us that when the day of prosperity comes, to be joyful. But he told us when the day of adversity comes which seems to be right there with the day of prosperity, that God put them that way so that no man will find anything in himself. For the child of God, his dependence is upon his Lord. It is not just a cliché. It is not something we find in the Word. It is something written upon his heart and written in his soul. For this battle, this battle wages on every day. We have a lot ahead of this little flock this week, not only that day, but once again another surgery looms clear ... near. And, you know, when Friday comes, after that is over we are all going to still struggle with those same three enemies. Because that is what life down here is, a struggle and a battle with those three enemies.

But the Lord, as we know and as we experience in our soul, he doesn't leave us. This morning I want to talk about a little passage the Lord has dropped down to me and it is instructions for battle, because we will wage battle this week. We will wage battle this day. We may be waging battle right now in this hour. That is the one thing that is really precious to me is when the Lord does draw us here together and he draws us here and his presence is here mightily and he speaks through the Word or through the hymns, through the music, through the prayers. It is really a refuge for the child of God. It really is. To take you away from those three enemies where the Lord has bound them and kept them outside of where the two or more are gathered in his name.

No, he is faithful. I want to share with you today. Our main text will come from Deuteronomy 20. You say, "Wow, that is a strange book." Many people think it is a book of the law, which it is not. It does mean second law, but it is all a book of grace. Once again, it is what he has done. Deuteronomy 20 when it was written by Moses, huh, it had a physical meaning at the time. They were ready to go into battle. So how is that relevant to you and me today? We have a battle. We have a battle that wages every day. Our text today will come from the first four verses of Deuteronomy 20. Let's read those together now.

When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 20:1-4.

I want to talk about three things in this passage to day. I first want to speak about the priest who must talk to every child of God before he goes to battle. I also want to speak about this Lord who fights for us and what that means. And, lastly, I want to talk about those three words that ends this passage, to save you.

So the first thing I want to focus on this morning is the priest. It is amazing how this little passage begins. When you go out to battle against thine enemies. And isn't it strange how he names three? He names the horses, he names the chariots and he names a people more than thou. And for the child of God he sees that real quickly through the spiritual eyes and the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost he sees that his enemies are also three fold. He sees that his enemies come at... on every... from every angle.

You know, I... to be in touch with what this enemy of Satan is, how he preys on the emotions of you and I, how he observes our daily walk, how he knows where our vulnerability is, how he knows just how to attack and where to attack, it truly says a lot for that enemy. His intelligence is very high. His army is very strong.

But let's not forget about the world. The world is so shiny, it seems like. You say, well, what a weird term. I think of shininess because I think of things we like to see or it draws our attention to. And the world in all of its allurements, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, the lust in the things that we see. And it is so subtle how it can take over your life, the world can. And it can just draw you in and you don't even realize it when it is going on. And before you know it, one hour, two hours, three hours is gone and you left there engulfed and having communion with the world. And, believe me, where there is communion with the world the child of God is left half dead. Where there is communion with Satan the child of God is left half dead. And when there is communion with the flesh how true that is, we are left half dead.

When we go out to battle against our enemies and see horses and chariots and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them. I don't know about you, but those words don't resonate with me. They don't when I read them. They don't when I read them in books. They don't when I even read them in the Word. Don't be afraid. How is it with you when people tell you not to be afraid? Does it give you immediate comfort? Do you just all of the sudden say, "Oh, that is right. I have got nothing to fear"?

We try to rationalize and use our logic sometimes to try to get away from fear or try not to fear. Be not afraid of them. But as you will see in just a moment, the only way that this army that is ready for battle cannot be afraid is when the priest is speaking in their ear.

"...be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."<sup>3</sup>

Now we all know that. To a person in this room that God has revealed himself to, you know that you have been saved. You know that salvation is in Christ. You know that you

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<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 20:1.

will be taken up to be with him one day. You know that the victory is in Christ and the victory is in everything that he has done. But it doesn't keep us in the thought of that even if we store it up in our minds or even if we remember it. It will not bring peace to the soul. And that is why the rest of this has to happen. He says:

“...be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”<sup>4</sup>

Do you remember that land? Do you remember the barrenness, the dryness of Egypt? Do you remember at one time where you walked the way of this world? Do you remember how empty it was and how you kept trying to fulfill something in you and it was never quenched? And then the Lord brought you up out of Egypt and he quickened you to new life. He quickened you by giving you an understanding and a new heart and a new will to love him. And he shed his love abroad in your heart that you would love him. Do you remember what Egypt was like? We can remember what Egypt was like, if we have been delivered from Egypt. And it is still not a deterrent to want to go back to Egypt.

Remember them in there? They kept saying, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Remember the leaks and all the things we had to eat there.”

That is the way we are. Oh, it was so much easier when we didn't realize we had these enemies. Boy, sometimes we would even sit and entertain the thought, that, wow, the world is better off being in darkness, because they don't have this warfare that we have. I know that as a young convert as one that the Lord revealed himself in my very beginning days, I had a lot of those thoughts. Oh, Lord, this is too hard. I can't do this. And how true that was. The Lord must undertake for us.

And then verse two comes along.

“And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle...”<sup>5</sup>

Nigh. It is the day of battle. The battle is on the horizon. It is time to fight.

“...that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people.”<sup>6</sup>

Well, there is our intercessor. There is our mediator. There is the Lord who readies us for the battle.

You say, “Well, wait a minute. In a minute you are going to tell me he is fighting for me.”

You are right. You are absolutely right about that. But the priest shall approach and speak unto the people. Isaiah said this in Isaiah 26:12. He said:

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 20:2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

“LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”<sup>7</sup>

No, wrong Isaiah. Sorry. Isaiah 52:6 says this:

“Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.”<sup>8</sup>

In that day, in the day of battle, in the day of adversity, I the day of trial, in the day of affliction, in the day when the world says this day will change how the life goes on from here. You might even entertain those thoughts. You may think that Tuesday will change your life. But if you are God’s child, if you are a child of God the results of Tuesday can have no effect on your soul. You will still fight that same battle when Tuesday is over and when Wednesday is over.

It is I. I am he that speaks. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice.” Paul tells us in Hebrews that we see Jesus. We hear Jesus. Jesus is our intercessor. As we come and approach the battle we must... they all must be taught of him.

Remember a few weeks ago we talked about what the Lord said was one thing needful. And that is to be brought to his feet to hear the instruction of our shepherd, to hear the instruction to go forth into battle, because I will fight for you. I have performed all things. We don’t want to get ahead of ourselves.

But this priest shall approach and speak unto the people. Paul says this in Hebrews 7:24 and 25. He says:

“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.”<sup>9</sup>

That is our intercessor. That is our mediator bringing us to the Father. That it the one telling us that it is going to be ok. And he is the only one that can tell us that.

You know, when I was a child that is what my mother was for. It didn’t matter what happened to me. If it got hurt or if I was scared about something I would always go to her. My dad was a little rougher. I would go to mom. Mom would always tell me that everything was going to be all right. And I would always believe it when I was young. Even when she was wrong, I would believe her the next time.

And then she started being wrong too much. And the Lord said to me, “You can’t listen to that.” And that is the case. We tend to surround ourselves, and we do, with the ones we love. We have got to hear the voice of the shepherd, because this battle that we fight every day we need to know that it is fought in him. We need to know that he has

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<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 26:12.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 52:6.

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews 7:24-25.

undertaken for us. And the only way we will know that is when he whispers in our ear in that still small voice. And when he speaks to us and says, “I have done it.”

Listen to what verse three say. This is what he says to his people.

“And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies.”<sup>10</sup>

Well, listen here. They are his enemies, too. And that is something very important of the child of God to understand that the enemies that we fight against daily are our Lord’s enemies. And he has put all of them under his feet. And we will put all of them, even though you may still see them every day, he has dominion over every one of them.

“And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint.”<sup>11</sup>

Dear ones, let not your hearts be troubled. Fear not and do not tremble. Fear not. I have not given you the spirit of fear, but I have given you power, love and a sound mind. Do not tremble. Neither be ye terrified because of them. Does the Lord not know our frame? Does he not know that these words describe the sheep? We tremble. Our hearts faint. We have great fear.

A couple of nights ago I had an attack of fear. I haven’t had one of those I a long time. But the fear was so strong and over all things it was losing the freedom to worship the Lord. And, boy, I tell you, my mind kept going and going and going and I just sat there and I shook and I shook. I did. I felt like the little trembling baby. And I couldn’t get out of it either until I heard his voice, till I felt his hand behind my head upholding me with power, till I heard my shepherd tell me, “Be not afraid.”

Yes, we must all hear from the priest. We must all hear and I mean all, I don’t mean corporately. I mean individually. That is how he calms the fears of his dear children. He speaks to each one.

Now I want to say a few words about verse four.

“For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you.”<sup>12</sup>

You know, every since the fall man has rebelled against this thought of the Lord fighting for us. Man has always tried to mix some kid of creature effort, some kind of thought, some kind of will, some kind of desire that he could do to save himself, to bring himself to God, to exalt himself in battle. See, the Lord our God is he that goes with us. And he is the one who fights for us. I am often reminded by the words that he gave Zechariah in Zechariah 4:6.

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<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 20:3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 20:4.

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”<sup>13</sup>

The army that we have is Christ himself, the captain of our salvation. I want to share with you now some of what the saints had to say. What did they have to say in the Word of God about the Lord fighting for them? I began with Job today. We all know the struggle that Job had. Elihu told him that God’s anger was kindled against him because he justified himself and not God. But the Lord brought Job to say these words in Job 42:2.

“I know that thou canst do every thing.”<sup>14</sup>

This is where Job was brought to the end. No more struggling in Job to perform. No more struggling in Job to justify himself. Isn't that what we try to do? We want others to think highly of us so we justify ourselves.

“I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.”<sup>15</sup>

When all of he exploits and everything that Job went through the Lord had to bring him to show him at the end that it was the Lord who fought for him. And Job had to be brought to see that it is he.

“I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.”<sup>16</sup>

Lord, I know now that it is you who has performed everything for me.

Isaiah, which I tried to read earlier, said this in 26:12.

“LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”<sup>17</sup>

He had to bring Isaiah in the midst of captivity, in the midst of a very troublesome time to see that it is the Lord who does all things for him.

“LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”<sup>18</sup>

And then in one of the verses I have shared a lot with you lately, it is David. Psalm 57:2.

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<sup>13</sup> Zechariah 4:6.

<sup>14</sup> Job 42:2.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 26:12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

“I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.”<sup>19</sup>

I love that verse. I have had a life that I have tried to perform a lot of things for myself and for others. But I tell you. The Lord’s rest, the rest that remains of the people of God is the rest that Christ has performed all things for.

Paul said... the next three will come from Paul. 1 Corinthians 12:11. After speaking about the diversity of gifts he says:

“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”<sup>20</sup>

All gifts dispersed, everything that the Lord gives is in his sovereignty and by that self same spirit. It is the same Holy Ghost that gives each one of his children in this room the gifts that they have. It is the same Holy Ghost that gives each measure of grace and ability. And it is that same Holy Ghost I the triune Lord that fights our battles. I am not saying today he helps us fight our battles. I am saying he has fought our battles.

Paul says this in Hebrews 13:20-21, how he ends Hebrews, actually.’

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>21</sup>

Yes, it is the Lord your God that goeth with you to fight for you. And the we are all very familiar with Philippians 2:13 and how... what a joy and what a gift that it came after 12.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”<sup>22</sup>

Did you ever notice that the to do part we always notice? But do you ever notice the to will part? We won’t even will it. We can’t even will to love him. We can’t even will to follow him.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”<sup>23</sup>

Now if you will turn with me over to Matthew 25 this is a very powerful passage here. I would like to begin in verse 31.

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<sup>19</sup> Psalm 57:2.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:11.

<sup>21</sup> Hebrews 13:20-21.

<sup>22</sup> Philippians 2:13.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.<sup>24</sup>

Do you see this? The children of God don't even know when the Lord is working in them. They can't claim this as their works. This world is so bent on what they have done for the Lord and the Lord looks at the righteous and says, "This is what you have done." And in the humility of Christ they say, "Lord, what have we done? We didn't do any of these. We didn't do any of these things. I know it is nice that you are trying to put them on us, but we haven't done this for you, Lord."

But eh Lord performed all things for them. The Lord did all things for them.

How interesting that is.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."<sup>25</sup>

Lord, I didn't even know I was doing it? Well, you know what? You weren't? It is all of him. What a beautiful passage to shut the mouths of all the works mongers, to shut the mouths of all of those who say, "I have done it all for you, Lord."

Dear Lord, what have I done in your name?

The people of God when humbled, when brought to the end of themselves, when they are shown that there is nothing good in them, the Lord shows them what he has done in them. This is the Lord that undertakes for me.

Now I would like to read you something. It goes along with this. This comes from Robert Hawker. It is a little long, so try to bear with me.

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew 25:31-40.

<sup>25</sup> Matthew 25:40.

The very life, indeed, of the soul is in Jesus. It is no longer kept up than it is preserved in him. The stream doth not depend more upon the fountain, neither the tree on the root, than the regenerated soul doth upon the life-giving Head. Consequently, therefore, the effects of that life, in whatever way it may be manifested, is in him. And hence all supplies, essential to preservation, must be constant, unremitting, perpetual. As the branch never ceases to receive sap and moisture from the vine to which it is united, and by which it is kept alive; so the believer never remits one moment deriving resources from Him, who is the life of the soul, and who, by way of explaining this precious affinity, saith, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." (John 15:5)

And what makes this life of dependence so very sweet and interesting is, that God the Holy Ghost, whose gracious work it is from first to last to carry it on, is continually exercising the soul by its wants to seek resources. It is he which reveals to the believer his own necessities, and the Redeemer's fullness; and then brings him to Jesus, for suitable supplies. So that by thus constantly living upon him, the believer is daily increasing in grace, in knowledge, in obedience, in love, and in affection, to the person and character of the Lord Jesus. Nothing can tend more to keep the soul humble than a daily sense of its own wants and insufficiency. And nothing will endear the Redeemer more to the heart than his daily, hourly supplies to the soul of all its necessities. And thus, when God the Spirit hath accomplished this blessed purpose by his divine teachings, and induced this spiritual frame of waiting on the Lord, in a constant dependence upon him, the believer experimentally feels somewhat of the spirit of the apostle, "to glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him." He literally rejoiceth in his own emptiness, that it may afford occasion to taste the sweetness of being filled from Jesus. And however paradoxical it may seem to the world, when he is most weak in himself, then he is most "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

I couldn't have said that any better. That is why I read that. Truly an anointed one who understood that it as his Lord who fought for him. It is his Lord who fights for him. It is his Lord who performs all things.

We have seen it in all the saints. And I didn't name them all. We certainly could undertake to speak of Moses. We could speak of Joshua. We could speak of Jacob. We could speak of all of God's children in this most holy book that have been brought to the end of themselves and have been shown the sufficiency and the supremacy of the Lord in their life.

"For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Deuteronomy 20:4.

And that is how we end today, to save you. What is it this morning that you need to be saved from? We know that salvation is of the Lord. And we are talking experientially now. Because we know that he can... he and he only saves and that salvation is in him and it is sure and it is steadfast, but what is it today that you need to be saved from? Is it your fears of the future? Is it your thoughts of this hour? Is it your readiness to work for one who has done all things for you? What is it that we need to be saved from? That is a question that the Holy Spirit must answer in your soul now.

I would like to leave you with the words of Zephaniah. Would you turn with me over to Zephaniah chapter three? We are going to begin in verse 14.

I want you to listen to the triumphant soul. This is the triumph in Christ.

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save.<sup>27</sup>

Notice what they had to be saved from. Bondage. They had to be saved from fear and the judgments of this life, from the bondage of this life.

... he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.<sup>28</sup>

Now we know this has a physical understanding with how the Lord brought his people back from captivity. But it certainly is experiential and spiritual to the child of God today how he revives us when we are revived to bring us back to captivity and to show us the freedom that is in Christ alone.

Sometimes we get so entangled with what is ahead of us that we lose sight of the one who has went before us and we lose sight of the one who has fought for us. Paul said in 2 Timothy two:

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<sup>27</sup> Zephaniah 3:14-17.

<sup>28</sup> Zephaniah 3:17-20.

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”<sup>29</sup>

Those are timely words for us. They are always timely words of the child of God whose eye looks at the water and the tumultuous ways and his eyes are no longer on his Lord. May the Lord be pleased to speak to you as the priest. May he prepare you for the battle ahead. May these instructions of battle be made real to your soul and may you find the rest and comfort in what Christ has done for his people. May he impress upon your soul this morning what it is finished, truly means for you and may he be glorified and may he save you from whatever it is this morning that troubles you.

*Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, add thy blessing for thy name's sake and glorify thy name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

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<sup>29</sup> 2 Timothy 2:4.