

Introduction:

- Let us remember this weekend those who gave their lives for our nation. And let us never forget that Freedom is not free!
- The Cheyenne Indians of the 1800s, living on the Great Plains of the United States, had six warrior societies. Perhaps the greatest of these was known as the Dog Soldiers. English journalist Henry Stanley, upon viewing them, described the Dog Soldiers as the "Spartans of the plains." Each one wore a sash around his waist, called a dog rope, with a picket pin at the end. This picket pin was a pointed stake, typically tied to the end of a rope, that could be driven into the ground to tether a horse, which could then graze but not wander off. In the case of the Dog Soldiers, the pin was driven into the ground as a mark of resolve in combat. When a Dog Soldier was staked to the ground in order to cover the retreat of his companions, he was required to remain there even if death was the consequence. The Dog Man could pull the pin from the ground only if his companions reached safety or another Dog Soldier released him from his duty. (Richard S. Grimes, "Cheyenne Dog Soldiers") Try to imagine being a Dog Soldier. The tribe is under attack by a strong enemy, and the battle has turned against it. Everyone must flee to preserve his life and the lives of his loved ones, but the enemy is pressing the fight, eager to wipe out every man, woman, and child. So, despite being alone against hundreds, perhaps thousands, we turn to face the adversary, uncoil our dog rope, and drive our pin into the ground, prepared at least to delay the enemy so that others can escape. Realistically, what chance do we have? Maybe it would be best to pull the pin or untie the dog rope and turn and run. But we cannot, for we are Dog Soldiers who had committed to give our lives, if necessary. **APPLICATION:** David charges Solomon to be strong, to be a man. God charges Joshua to be strong and courageous. Each of these men were being called to take up the mantle of leadership and guide God's people faithfully. That takes courage and strength. Each and every man and women is called to be strong and courageous in their service to Christ. We are all called to lead in the fight against encroaching darkness. Sometimes we may find ourselves alone, the only one dogged and willing to stand. Nevertheless, our call is to fight to the end. **"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them"** (Joshua 1:6). IE. Marines, According to USMC legend, the moniker was used by German soldiers to describe U.S. Marines who fought in the Battle of Belle Wood in 1918. The Marines fought with such ferocity that they were likened to "Devil dogs" "Dogs from Hell." Devil Dogs just do not quit.
- On this Memorial Day as we remember our nations fallen heroes, I thought it appropriate to talk about our warfare as Christians. At the start of this year I felt impressed of the Lord to say to us *"that our warfare would increase this year, but not to be afraid."* This could mean a couple of things. One, we are going to take some land this year. Two, we are a threat to our enemy the devil. Or, both. You may have to fight for the restoration you desired for 2016. It's promised!

I. Remember We Are In A Fight

- A. *"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 6:12, NLT)
1. As Christians we must never forget that we are not fighting against each other but against evil rulers, authorities of the unseen world, might powers in this dark world and against evil spirits in heavenly places.
 2. We are told to in 1 Peter 5:8 *to be sober* – don't be careless. A drunken man is not aware of what is going on around him. A drunken man is not paying attention to possible harm. A drunken man cannot effectively defend himself. He becomes an easy target. To be sober is to be aware and evaluating clearly. Has nothing to do with alcohol.
 3. We are told *to be vigilant*. That means we are to wake up, be alert and to pay attention.
 4. We are in a spiritual fight with hell itself. Many people forget this and they begin to fight the battle in the natural rather than in the spirit. When we do that we get carnal. We start using the weapons of our flesh. You cannot use fleshly weapons against spiritual enemies!
 5. Remember, we are in a fight and heroes are born out of great fights/struggles. Hero - in the face of danger, combats adversity through bravery or strength, often sacrificing his/her/their own personal concerns for some greater good. I.e. X-Men, Superman, General Patton, General Washington, Mother Theresa, your dad. Heroes are born in the midst of adversity, by overcoming. Another observation is that they do not see themselves as heroes, just people doing their job.
- B. Who is our enemy? Three words will suffice for today.
1. Peter calls him our adversary. *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."* (1 Peter 5:8, NKJV)
 - a) The word enemy comes from Gr. antidikos=opponent, one who stands against. dikos - a word for justice. anti-justice is what the enemy wants. No justice for you. No mercy.
 - b) We are to watch out for our enemy for he is "seeking" whom he may devour. Therefore make him starve! Live out of your position in Christ.
 2. John calls him the accuser of the brethren. *"...the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth– the one who accuses them before our God day and night."* (Revelation 12:10, NLT) See also: (Job 1:6ff.; Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10)

- a) The word means “to expose,” or, more broadly, “to betray,” “to make known,” “to declare.” In Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 422). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- b) It is what Christians do when they are “putting someone down” or speaking against them, belittling them. *“Oh we are just sharing truth.”* The purpose of accusation is to separate and divide and that is not of God.
- 3. Jesus calls our enemy a thief. Gr. Klepto - Stealing takes place by night (Job 24:14) and by force (24:16); its marks, then, are secrecy and violence. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 441). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans. In other words, he is thug that steals (self serving), kills (Death is master), destroys (works to mar the image of God in humanity) He does that spiritually, emotionally, physically.
- C. We are called to stand against him.
 - 1. *“Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness.”* (Ephesians 6:14, NLT) Heroes are born in a fight so stand your ground!
 - 2. Unpack this word ‘stand.’ This is where heroes begin to be born.
 - a) The main use is in Paul, mostly in the imperative (It is a command.) Ie. Just like the dog soldiers.
 - b) Believers are to stand firm in 1 Cor. 16:13; they do so in faith on the basis of God’s promises. Standing in faith is standing in the Lord (Phil. 4:1), for faith looks to the Lord, and he enables it to stand. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 1082). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
 - c) Standing in the Lord gives sustaining power and creates fellowship, i.e., standing in one spirit (Phil. 1:27).
 - d) For Paul *stēkō* suggests that in faith we achieve a standing that is grounded in God, not in the world, and that confers fellowship and freedom. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 1082). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- D. Church you are in a spiritual fight, so stand!

II. Remember We Are Learning to Fight

- A. When you have an enemy,
 - 1. You learn to fight or to live as a slave. Slaves produce for their master! Do not live for your adversary, your accuser or the enemy of your souls.
 - 2. When you have an enemy you learn to fight or to be destroyed. If he is stealing, killing and destroying you have to stand and fight or you will be like Gideon, threshing wheat in wine press.
 - 3. IE. I watched Braveheart recently. *“I *am* William Wallace! And I see a whole army of my countrymen, here in defiance of tyranny. You’ve come to fight as free men... and free men you are. What will you do with that freedom? Will you fight? Aye,*

fight and you may die. Run, and you'll live... at least a while. And dying in your beds, many years from now, would you be willin' to trade ALL the days, from this day to that, for one chance, just one chance, to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take... OUR FREEDOM!

- B. Joshua had to enter the Promised Land and drive out the inhabitants. In so doing they learned obedience and trust in the Lord their God.
- C. After Joshua's death. *"These are the nations that the Lord left in the land to test those Israelites who had not experienced the wars of Canaan. He did this to teach warfare to generations of Israelites who had no experience in battle."* (Judges 3:1-2, NLT) *"These people were left to test the Israelites—to see whether they would obey the commands the Lord had given to their ancestors through Moses."* (Judges 3:4, NLT)
1. Test - "In most contexts Heb. *nāsâ* has the idea of testing or proving the quality of someone or something, often through adversity or hardship. (with situations where a person or a nation is undergoing a trial or difficult time brought about by another)" *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 581). Chicago: Moody Press. IE Navy Seals are tested severely before graduating BUDS (seal school).
 2. Teach - Heb. *lamaud* - comes from the word meaning 'ox goad'. In Hebrew all learning and teaching is ultimately to be found in the fear of the Lord (Deut 4:10; 14:23; 17:19; 31:12, 13). To learn this is to come to terms with the will and law of God. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 480). Chicago: Moody Press.
 3. The basics of the test is to learn to "fight" and to learn to "trust".
 - a) In faith we stand firm
 - b) In resurrection power we stand firm
 4. It was also for the succeeding generation to learn obedience and war. To fight for what God has given. This is what Joshua and the judges and Kings did.
- D. Our call is not just a call to stand but to stand firm. *"Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil."* (Ephesians 6:11, NLT) There is a place in Christ where we are called to stand firm...meaning you are an overcomer! You are more than just a conquerer! You are a child of the Most High High! You are in a spiritual fight in Christ Jesus so STAND FIRM!!! What else can you do in Christ?

III. Remember Last One Standing Wins the Fight

- A. Stand your ground! *"Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness."* (Ephesians 6:14, NLT) IE. "A stand-your-ground law (sometimes called "line in the sand" or "no duty to retreat" law) authorizes people to protect and defend themselves against threats or perceived threats. This type of law states that people have no duty to retreat from any place where they have a lawful right to be and that they may use any level of force if they reasonably believe they face an imminent and immediate threat of serious bodily harm or death."

- B. Stand your ground with spiritual weapons NOT carnal or fleshly. What are spiritual weapons? They are weapons found "In Christ". We put them on with faith. You don't do this everyday. You do it when you believe. As you grow in faith and your knowledge of God, they get bigger.
1. Truth
 2. Righteousness
 3. Peace that comes from the Gospel. Jesus has already "got this" he is our dread champion. *"But the LORD is with me like a dread champion; Therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will be utterly ashamed, because they have failed, With an everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten."* NASB
 4. Shield of faith
 5. Helmet of salvation
 6. Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.
 7. These weapons are mighty not carnal 2 Cor 10:4-5
- C. After the battle! I read Eph 6:13 this week and I had to chuckle by the way the NLT translates it. But it made my heart happy. *"Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm."* (Ephesians 6:13, NLT) Three things in this verse: Get ready! You will fight. And if you fight God's way. After the battle you will still be standing firm. He is talking about you and me not being moved.
1. Therefore - because of our enemy we are to put on every piece of God's armor.
Note: none of them are carnal. They are spiritual pieces of armor.
 2. If you put them on you will be able to resist, stand, stand some more, and still be standing when the battle is over.

Conclusion:

- Heroes are not born. They are born out of struggles overcoming all odds. They are born facing adversity and never giving up.
- As Christians we are called to stand, stand firm, and to still be standing after the battle. You do that and you are a hero! You make the Hebrews 11 faith hall of fame.
- Invitation to make Jesus Lord of your life.