

**The
Christian
Warrior**

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Table of Contents

Introduction To Christian Warriors.....	3
The History Of Christian Pacifism.....	4
The Roman Military Oath.....	5
Constantine's Conversion.....	9
The Lamb And The Lion.....	11
What Was Jesus Really Like?.....	12
The Politically Correct Christ?.....	14
The Christian Man - Like Jesus.....	15
Unconditional Submission Is Wrong.....	16
The Sword In Its "Proper" Place.....	18
Fighting Spiritual Warfare.....	21
On Liberalism And Christianity.....	22
Christ's Birthday.....	24
On Loftiness.....	26
Christian Tolerance.....	27
On Loving Enemies.....	28
On Revenge.....	29
On Forgiveness.....	32
Overcoming Fear.....	33
Pride, Ego, And The Christian Warrior.....	35
On Leadership.....	36
On Discipline.....	40
The Warrior's Cross.....	41
A Prayer Before Battle.....	42
The Christian Warrior's Prayer.....	45

To prevent the unforeseen when I'm alone and down the block
I pack a Holy Bible...a Bible and a Glock.

If the enemy opposing has a Christian soul to seal
I will bless him with a scripture, but if not... with lead and steel.

I want to live in peace with everyone I see.
I shall always try to do so, as much as depends on me.

But there's no evil I will stand, no devil hand that I won't still
Like the Lion and the Lamb. The very hand that blesses you can kill!

To prevent the unforeseen when I'm alone and down the block
I pack a Holy Bible...a Bible and a Glock.

Introduction To Christian Warriors

This book took a great deal of coaxing for me to write. I had several colleagues and friends insist for many months that such a book needed writing. I always pointed out that I was not knowledgeable enough, or not worthy, and put it off. But it was not until I sat at a third grade breakfast at my son's school that I decided to proceed.

As Cheryl and I sat with our kids the mother of one of their friends came by and sat with us. It was winter but I had a nice sun burn from a recent trip to Central America I'd just returned from. She inquired about it and I told her I was down in Piedras Negras training bodyguards, cops, and business owners in our gunfighting program. I mentioned that just about anyone in Central America was at risk of violent crime so students were very motivated to learn what I had to say. She said that I should write a book. I laughed as I washed down the last of my cinnamon roll with some coffee.

"I've already written a couple", I said.

"Not for pistoleros or commandoes, for regular people", she immediately replied.

I gave her a confused look as if to say, why would any "regular people" want to read about that? Before I could say what I was thinking, she said, "How a Christian man can do what you do would be a great read".

The perception that a Christian man could not possibly teach other men to fight and shoot and so on, and still be a Christian was on her mind, as it has been on the minds of many I have crossed paths with in the last few years. Yes, the book needed writing. So here goes.

What you are about to read is a compilation of various articles and essays I wrote for our online newsletter - **The Warrior News**. This was begun in 2000 as a compliment to our training courses and contained a multitude of pertinent subjects for our readership weapons discussions, tactics, a little politics, and of course a section devoted to spiritual development titled Christian Warrior.

One might ask why something called Christian Warrior was even necessary. Or that the two words simply do not go together. That is a common misunderstanding in many churches today. We address that and many other misconceptions and even some total lies told from the pulpits of America.

You will see when you read the text.

First of all I must point out that I am no pastor or reverend. I have never been to "seminary", or bible school, and I flunked Religious Studies in high school. I am but an interested sinner who met God one night on stroll through the valley of the shadow of death. I've been carrying my cross and following Him ever since. Here is a story of what came of that meeting, the subsequent walk and what I have learned along the way.

Gabe Surez

Prescott, AZ

The History Of Christian Pacifism

As we whistle through the first decade of the New millennium, we find ourselves embroiled in conflict with a new enemy. The previous century saw conflicts between city-states, between small states, large nations and even between regions. We saw a "cold war" between political ideologies. This new war is much more than that and before the final shot is fired, we will see its zones of conflict span and traverse all boundaries whether political, social, or of faiths. Truly it is a struggle of faiths. Colored otherwise as it may be by politician and media pundit alike, it is clear that this is a struggle between Islam (the so-called religion of peace), and the Christian-based nations of the Western world, with its focal point being, as it has been for decades, the tiny nation of Israel.

So it is with this backdrop that I want to examine the Christian Doctrine of Pacifism. I and many of my colleagues do not believe such a doctrine is biblically correct. My objective then is to find whence it came into acceptance, who brought it, and possibly determine why. Knowing this we can make rational decisions about whether such a perspective truly is of God...or not.

I want to point out that I am a born again Christian. Yet, although I prefer living in peace, I am no pacifist. When I became a Christian, I was prepared to sell all my guns and knives and adopt whatever life the Lord put in front of me. But the spirit did not lead me to cast away my sword, only to put it in its correct place...specifically as a tool of justice.

I've killed men in combat and do not regret it for a moment. Moreover, if God puts me in the place of battle again facing men of evil, I will do so again without hesitation. I firmly believe that Jesus does not teach pacifism, but rather He teaches us to seek peace. There is a difference there. True Pacifism (peace at any price) and Seeking Peace (but not at any price) are separated by a wide gulf.

As much as depends on us, we are to try to live in peace with all men. But often, such things do not depend on us. We are entrusted with the world by God. Although we are to

have a light touch on the things of this world while earnestly seeking Him, we are not called to ignore the world with an excessively lofty spiritual view of things. Rather good stewardship demands that we act well with those things (people) entrusted to us...just like the parable of the talents.

We are to provide for those entrusted to us (family, church, etc.). To deny this cross is to deny the faith and be worse than an unbeliever. Provision includes food, shelter, spiritual guidance AND safety. Some may say that that is why they pay taxes...so the government will protect them. Sorry, that won't do it completely. Just as we would not expect the United States Government (and would in fact resist it if it tried) to provide us with food, housing, and religious teaching, neither can we abrogate the right and duty to provide for our own protection, and that of our families. To cause others to deny their cross this way (via incorrect teachings) is even worse, and the future of such are filled with waiting millstones.

We are all magistrates of God's word and kingdom. Just as we would not allow unchallenged teachings of blasphemy and immorality to our churches and children, so must we resist (in love) unsound teachings. And similarly must we resist violent crimes, and terrorism as much as we are physically (and spiritually) able. Where the spoken word of prayer may be enough in one case, the threat of violent physical action via the readiness of the sword (or in our day the availability of the loaded pistol) will suffice.

We can make a good case, based on scripture, that peace at any price (Pacifism) is not sound doctrine. We did that very thing in this essay titled The Foolishness Of Christian Pacifism.

I will seek to find the first instances of pacifism in the writings of early church leaders. We I will examine the social issues of the day as well as the dynamics of the Christian in society to see why such a stance may have been taken.

First I want to be clear about the definitions. A pacifist is a person who refuses to act in violence in any way, for any reason, or at any time. Such a person will die, and watch others die, before ever resorting to violent means to save himself or others. In contrast, one can love peace and seek it, but not at any price. A man can desire peace with a gun in his hand.

One thing I immediately noticed in my research was that the arguments for pacifism revolved around the propriety of Christian service in the Roman military. Nothing was written until much later about the physical resistance of brigands by individual citizens. Since almost every sin was elaborated on in the early writings, some that we had never even heard of, it is curious that individual violence in self-defense was conspicuously missing....perhaps in their minds one had nothing to do with the other. Perhaps it was due to the oath required for military service.

The Roman Military Oath

The First century world of the Christian church was ruled by the iron fist of Rome. Although the Gospel was being spread daily, paganism and idolatry were still very

prevalent. In the Roman army, they were the order of the day.

Whether Christian or pagan, inductees into the Roman Army were required to swear the oath of the Roman military. The Roman soldier had to pledge allegiance in a sacred oath, known as the *Sacramentum*. This pledge included the idea that a position in the Roman military was of sacred importance. The oath was recited on enlistment, on the third of January, and on the anniversary of the current emperor's reign. One of the main points of the oath is to whom the soldier pledged his loyalty: in the Republic, the commander of the unit received the pledge; while in the Empire, the emperor received the pledge. This change was enacted under Augustus, who believed the oath could be used by generals to place the power of the emperor over the soldiers.

Here is one version of it:

"I swear by Jupiter Optimus Maximus and by any other god I may hold in my heart to be holy, and by the majesty of the Imperator and by the Senate of Rome, which next to our gods should be loved and worshipped by the human race. I, swear to perform with enthusiasm whatever the Imperator and my Legion commander should command, follow all laws set forth by the Senate of Rome, never to desert, and not to shrink from death on behalf of the Roman State. "

I can see several points that any Christian, especially a 1st Century one, would find objectionable. Add to this the fact that Caesar used the army to persecute and kill Christians, often sacrificing them to their gods, and you get a picture where it becomes untenable for a true Christian to be involved with them. Compare this to a modern illustration: A Christian being conscripted into the German SS during WW2, knowing they must deny God and serve Hitler, as well as knowing they will be ordered to commit atrocities. What kind of Christian would go along with that? A similar set of circumstances was taking place for the early Christians.

One of the early apologists was Justin of Caesarea, often referred to as Justin Martyr. He wrote in 140 A.D. - 160 A.D. His assertion was that the prophecies in Isaiah 2:4 with regards to the New Kingdom, were already here.

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah was prophesying about the New Kingdom, not the kingdom still on earth. As we know, to this day, nations are still killing each other and the Lord has not yet come to institute His reign. Much less in Justin's day. Great Christian apologist or not, he a man, and was wrong with his interpretation and timing.

Apologists who followed Justin Martyr, such as Irenaeus, Clement, Origin, and others prior to the Council of Nicea also referred to the Isaiah argument as their biblical justification against military service in the Roman army for Christians.

Tertullian was another apologist who wrote between 160 - 220 A.D. in North Africa. He noted, "There is no agreement between the Divine (sacrament) and the human sacrament (Roman Oath) ".

Furthermore, Tertullian writes, "Shall it be held awful to make an occupation of the sword when the Lord preaches that he who uses the sword shall perish by the sword? And shall the son of peace take part in the battle when it does not become him even to

sue at law?"

Tertullian makes quite a leap here. First of all, Christ did not eschew the sword. Rather he taught the sword in its proper place, and that those whose only resource was violence won inevitably perish by it. In Luke 22:36-38 Christ admonishes us to be prepared to provide for our own security *vis a vis* the sword.

Luke 22:36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take *it*, and likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Luke 22:37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

Luke 22:38 And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

We can argue about the meaning of this Scripture, but the fact remains that Christ told His men to arm themselves. When they returned to him with two swords, he did not correct them as He did at other times when they mistook His teachings, but rather told them that two was enough.

The sword was meant for physical protection against evil men in a fallen world. It was not to be relied upon exclusively, but rather kept in its proper place and for its proper use.

John 18:10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

John 18:11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

Luke 22:50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

Luke 22:51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

Moreover, Christ did in fact tell Peter the Swordsman that those who take up the sword, shall perish by the sword. But in what context?

Matthew 26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

Matthew 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Matthew 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Matthew 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Consider the context. Christ was being arrested and surrounded. It was His mission to give himself up and be sacrificed. If His men stood and fought at that moment they would have been killed. Those who took up the sword *at that particular time* would have certainly been killed by the swords of the enemy.

Christ would not tell His men to arm themselves and later contradict His teachings.

Tertulians reference to suing refers to Matthew 5:25.

Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Matthew 5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Matthew 5:25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Matthew 5:26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Specifically this refers to suing a brother, or being in agreement with a brother (a fellow believer). Many of the courtesies described in Scripture refer to daily dealings between fellow believers. Thus we should seek remedies without resorting to suing and fighting between members of the Church.

In reading the context of Tertullian I see that he was trying to convince Christians to not serve in the military and was seeking scriptures to support that stance. In other words, if suing a brother was not becoming, how then could one persecute and murder a brother, even if ordered to do so by a military commander.

Cyprian, a disciple of Tertullian wrote, " It is hypocrisy to proclaim a hero and valiant, the person who will destroy and devastate the life and property of *innocent people* in organized warfare when if the same occurs in peacetime, it is considered a crime". The key words are "innocent people", as distinguished from evil aggressors. One can hardly disagree with such a point.

The last Pre-Constantine apologist was Lactantius. He wrote a mammoth treatise named the Divine Institutes on or about 300 A.D. This is what he said, " For when God forbids us to kill, He not only prohibits us from open violence, which is not even allowed by public laws, but He warns us against the commission of those things which are esteemed lawful among men".

Although, like the others, Lactantius was no doubt well-meaning, his grasp of the scriptures was incomplete. God does not forbid killing (in fact He often requires it), but rather He forbids murder. The gulf between the two is wide and deep. And although defining and describing what each one is would be easy, it would take space which this essay does not have in surplus. In short killing is an act that can be justified or condemned based in the intent of the actor. Killing may be justified, murder is never justified.

Exodus 20:13 You shall not murder.

Without the biblical prohibition against killing, Lactantius' argument falls apart.

So we can summarize that Pre-Constantine apologists had objections to Christians serving in the Roman Army in particular, and because of that objected to all martial

pursuits. They based their objections because of the demands of the Roman military oath that went in conflict with God's law, and because of the military activity in the persecution of Christians in particular. Moreover, they based their "swords into plowshares" argument on the belief that the New Kingdom spoken about by Isaiah was here and now, and not in the future. Likewise a confused understanding of the difference between killing and murder supported a pacifistic view.

Constantine's Conversion

Many years later, in 312 A.D., Constantine stood near a bridge in Italy preparing to battle Licinius for the city of Rome. There he had a vision. In the vision he saw the shape of a cross with the words, "Conquer By This".

Constantine fashioned a cross of two spears and marched it at the front of his army, routing the enemy and capturing Rome.

In 313 A.D. Constantine granted freedom of religion to all and ended the persecution of Christians. It is argued by some that Constantine was never a Christian and that he was a pagan to his dying day. Nevertheless, the effects he had on the church were profound.

Since Christians would not be required to swear by an oath not acceptable to them, and since sacrifice and persecution of Christians was no longer required, Christians now saw themselves free to serve in the army of Rome, and the distinction between secular and spiritual virtually disappeared.

In 314 A.D. at a council in Aries, church leaders announced, "They who throw away their weapons in time of peace shall be excommunicated". Excommunication was by far a fate worse than death to early Christians and usually reserved for the worst of the worst. Thus to cast away one's weapons in time of peace was held right up there with witchcraft, sodomy, heresy, and all the other 4th Century major crimes.

Athanasius and Ambrose, two Post-Nicene church leaders promoted the necessity of Christians to support the secular government via military service, and pronounced it as service to God.

Athanasius is one of the writers of catholic doctrine. On or about 350 A.D., he wrote, "Murder is not permitted, but to kill one's adversary in war is both lawful and praiseworthy".

Well!

Ambrose was more specific. He did not distinguish between a soldier in war or a citizen in peace. In 375 A.D. he wrote, "**And that courage which either protects the homeland against barbarians in war, or defends the weak at home, or saves one's comrades from brigands, is full of righteousness**".

Well! Well!

Ambrose is noteworthy in that he is the first of the early writer I am aware of that lists "soldier defending nation, policeman defending the weak, and armed citizen defending

against brigands" in the same context of courage and righteousness.

Augustine was there in 409 A.D. when the Goths sacked Rome. He came to see the church as having the responsibility to provide for the welfare of the nation...specifically in the | context of security.

Remember this scripture - 1 Timothy 5:8 *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.*

It was Augustine who formulated the concept of the just war. A just war would be approved by God if the following conditions were met:

- 1). War is declared by the sovereign of state.
- 2). War is to be declared only after all peaceful means of accomplishing resolution have been exhausted. Inner love must be the motivation.
- 3). The objective must be the punishment or prevention of evil, injustice, or atrocity.
- 4). It must be directed to enemy forces, not to innocents.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.) a definer of Catholic theology confirmed Augustine's | Just War Concept, as did Martin Luther, and John Calvin.

I believe that the early apologists advocated pacifism because of the odious requirements of Roman military service. And that once those specific requirements were no longer an issue, military service was not only acceptable, but desirable. Further, that the use of arms in personal defense was common in those days and differentiated from military service as always acceptable even when military service might not be.

Today, there are some who still believe that to be a Christian is to be a pacifist. I will submit that such a doctrine is not only ungodly, but may be immoral and sinful in many cases, if not simply cowardly. Some who advocate pacifism have, like the servant in the parable, buried their talent in the dirt rather than put it to good use. They believe that what takes place here on earth is not "of no consequence". To the contrary, we are entrusted with this world must show we have used our "talents" well.

Pacifism is immoral because the pacifist enjoys the security provided by the warrior without paying for it either physically or spiritually. He won't die to protect his children, but expects you to do so in his stead. In essence, the pacifist is a coward hiding his cowardice in spiritualism.

It is clear that the argument over pacifism in the early church was predicated on the excesses of the roman military service, and the Military Oath in particular. Once such requirements ended, the pacifistic doctrine changed. I submit that there is no scripture in The Old Testament or New Testament that advocates a "peace at any price" teaching, and that teaching such a doctrine is not only selfish to the utmost, but as mentioned in Timothy - denies the faith.

As I concluded this study, I believe fully that the Gospel has never taught us to be pacifists, but rather that we are to, as much as we are able, to seek peace. But the context

is clear. Not at any price.

This is reality, and to ignore it is both naive and irresponsible, and smacks of an excessively lofty and spiritual view of things. There is a point where we must pick up the sword, so that we can continue to live in peace. Clearly, to have peace, one must often be willing to fight, to kill, and to die for it. To have peace, we must often enforce such a peace with the readiness to do sudden battle anywhere, anytime, and with complete disregard for our own safety. Whether in an airplane facing terrorists or in a dark parking lot facing muggers, it is the holy duty (and the cross put in front of us) of any able-bodied Christian man of God to stand strong with courage and righteousness and execute wrath on those who would do us evil.

Christ does not want a bunch of glad-handing, always-submissive, no-load-nice-at-all-costs pumpkin boys to lead His church. Let's gather around our Lord as the Gadites gathered around David!!

Exodus 15:3 Jehova is a warrior - Jehova is His name Jesus is a warrior - Jesus is His name

The Lamb And The Lion

At a recent Bible study we discussed an interesting issue. The duality of Jesus. Our Lord is often depicted (by man) as a weak frail, feminine looking man. These well-meaning but incorrect artists have portrayed a partial Christ. Jesus may have wept over Jerusalem, but He also physically kicked multiple grown men out of the Temple with His hands and with a whip He made with His own hands. And they were so terrified of Him that they never came back!

I discussed this with Dale Fricke (our Chaplain) and he mentioned a study he was conducting about how the church had become feminized during the Industrial Revolution. Having worked long hours all week and perhaps still on Sunday, in those days, men tended to not attend church as much as the ladies. Seeing a predominant female presence in church, pastors and priests no doubt began to tailor the music, worship, and teachings to them. The church focus became organized toward them. That of course doesn't change the nature of Christ one bit.

Christ is God and He is man. He is at the same time the compassionate Savior and the Lord God of Hosts. A healer and a warrior. The Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah.

Christ, as you will recall reading, was not "taken" by His enemies, but rather that He willingly gave Himself up to die for us. That was after all, His mission. It occurred to me that unless the Lamb has the Lion within Him, the Lamb has no choice in the matter of being taken. Christ had the power to wipe out those who were torturing and killing Him (The Lion Of Judah), yet He obeyed His Father's orders (The Lamb of God). His mission was to sacrifice Himself.

He is always our example and role model. And we are to emulate Him. Yet I think much emulation of the compassionate Christ has already been done. And emulating the lamb

is not sufficient if the lion is ignored. Emulating this compassion means nothing if there is not also the emulation of the Lion.

We, and I am talking to the men here, are created for combat. We are wired to fight against evil. It is our nature. It is what we have longed for since childhood. Regardless of what silly theologians may say or what mis-educated writers and pastors may argue, this is the case. If you search within your heart you know this to be true. It is secular society that breeds it out of our hearts and this must be stopped immediately. Be the Lamb? Yes...but be the Lion too.

Physically, it means that you must be ready for the test should it choose you. You may be the next passenger on the flight chosen by terrorists. Don't shrink from this, but rather pray it is your turn in the fight against evil. Boy! Won't they be surprised when you ram a #2 pencil right into their eye!

Remember Joshua 1:9

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Spiritually, we must be strong leaders and examples in our homes and communities. Political correctness be damned! What is right is right and we must take a stand and cast off this emasculating moral relativism disguised as tolerance that is forced down our throat daily by a sick society.

Christ was an in-your-face orator and a controversial teacher. He did not go along to get along. He told it, and tells it, like it is. Let Him be your example.

When they ask what would Jesus do? Remember that Our Lord was a man's man and the fierce Lion of Judah, just as much as the compassionate Lamb of God.

What Was Jesus Really Like?

If we were to ask a group of modern Christian men this question, how would they answer? Undoubtedly they would say He was (is) the Son Of God. Quite correct, but what was He as a man?

They might bring up all the qualities of the Lamb. Jesus was kind and considerate and loving. They might say He was a nice guy.

Yes. All great things, but what else was He? Answer that.

He was a healer and a teacher.

Of course. He was all of these things, but is that all He was. Is that the example He set? Most modern Christian men would say..."Yes". They have been brought up on only a partial image of Christ. We know the image don't we. The kind appearing face on the medieval paintings, or the passive-looking, domesticated Christ depicted in modern new-age bibles.

But Christ was and is much more than that.

Consider, for example, that He was a carpenter. I know a few carpenters. They have all manner of modern tools which were not around to make work easy 2000 years ago. And even today, these are strong and physical men. What would a carpenter have been like back in those days?

Hardly the powder puff boy some artists like to portray Christ as.

Consider who He surrounded Himself with. He did not attract those with manicured hands accustomed to easy living. To the contrary, His disciples were rough physical men. Think what physical strength a fisherman must have had to lift nets full of fish onto a boat. Think of the original 12 and all the others that came with them. Would they have followed someone who was frail and had no command presence? Hardly.

I keep bringing up this event, but it is an important point when discussing the character of Jesus.

Mat 21:12 And Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

John 2:15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. Christ made an impact weapon and went into the temple and kicked out everyone, physically. He was not concerned that their feelings would be hurt, or try to understand what had caused them to be like that. Nope. He saw something wrong and He fixed it.

Now think of this scene. A temple full of rough men making money. Along comes a frail, compassionate, kind soul and convinces them by power of reasoning alone to leave.

Huh?

Not quite the picture we see. Christ entered into a group and soundly thrashed them physically. Think of the kind of man it would take to go into a biker bar and successfully kick all their butts at the same time without incurring one single injury! Amazing!

That is the duality of Lamb and Lion that has been so forgotten today. We sing about it in worship don't we?

"The Lion and the Lamb" "The Lion and the Lamb".

But how many Christian men realize its significance as they sing? We are called to be like Christ alright, but the Total Christ. Christ the Warrior as well as Christ the Compassionate. The Lion of Judah as well as the Lamb of God.

Exodus 15:3 The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name.

Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing

Jeremiah 20:11 But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will I stumble, they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten.

Malachi 3:6 "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever."

So what God was at one point, He is still today. And what Christ will be one day, He is today. We are to be like Him. We have much work to do. So lets get busy.

The Politically Correct Christ?

Was Jesus politically correct? What a question! It must be asked however. The reason it must be asked is simply that ALL True Christians should seek to emulate Christ. Similarly all true churches should seek to be like Christ. And since we see such an effort today by prominent church leaders almost apologizing for being Christians, and teaching their churches primarily to be unoffending, and so, well...politically correct, the question must be answered.

Lets define political correctness. First of all it is hypocritical and deceitful. It means that you will seek to avoid offending at all costs. That in fact, to lie, in order to avoid offending, is better than to speak the truth. That is, if your goal is to be "PC". This is where terms like "Alternative Lifestyles" are used as replacements for "homosexual partnerships", and "Undocumented Immigrant" for "Illegal Alien".

Neither one was as much of an issue in Jesus' time as they were today in our "civilized" world. But what was a big issue was the dilution of God's Word by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Read the following scriptures and tell me whether Christ was worried about being "PC".

Matthew 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 15:1-3 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." He answered them, "And why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

Christ was pretty clear in how He dealt with that which was scripturally wrong. He was a kind and gentle man at times, but an "in your face" teacher when challenged. He didn't worry that the Pharisees would go home and feel offended, nor did He concern Himself with their "self-esteem". He told it like it was and said what was on his mind. That is how we must be and not like some pusillanimous nice-guy-at-all-costs preachers whose only goal is to make sure they offend no-one, focusing exclusively on the offering basket, as they teach wrong doctrine.

I believe that Political Correctness is a mental disease brought on by personal insecurity and the subsequent desire to please others so that they will accept you. It ranks right up there with the fear of weapons and of the dark. Well my friends, we Christian Warriors have a much higher calling than the opinions of others. Was Christ politically correct? Absolutely not! Let us be likewise.

The Christian Man - Like Jesus

If you ask the average Christian man about the attributes of a "good man", he will likely list things like; patience, loving, kindness, gentleness, attentiveness, etc. He will list all manner of things that the church culture will attribute to a "nice guy", or to a nice "grandmother". If you challenge them, they will point out that Jesus is like that!

Yet there are plenty of Scriptures contradicting that idea. We have already discussed the time when Jesus emptied the temple of dozens of grown men...physically beating them. We can point out how He challenged the Pharisees many times in public, not meekly submitting to authority.

Matthew 15:6-7 So, for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites!

Matthew 15:12-13 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

He answered, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. And we can't forget when He mocked Herod publicly

Luke 13:32 And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.

Does that sound like the "patient, loving, kind, giving, attentive and safe" Christian nice guy?? Hardly.

So why do so many Christian men seem to be otherwise?? Because they have been misled. It is easy for church leaders and for the community in general to control a man who is passive and quiet and who will not protest. A man like Jesus, on the other hand...the real Jesus, is impossible to control. Are we not supposed to become more like Him??

Here is another one from further in the Book -

Revelations 19:11 And I saw Heaven opened. And behold, a white horse! And He sitting on him was called Faithful and True. And in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Revelations 19:12 And His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head many crowns. And He had a name written, one that no one knew except Himself.

Revelations 19:13 And He had been clothed in a garment dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Revelations 19:14 And the armies in Heaven followed Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Revelations 19:15 And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, so that with it He should strike the nations. And He will shepherd them with a rod of iron. And He treads the winepress of the wine of the anger and of the wrath of Almighty God.

Hardly the Pumpkin Boy many Christian men think they need to emulate to be "good". Listen my friends, Jesus is at the same time loving, and fierce. He is both patient with

his children and angry at evil. Remember that He is both the Lamb AND the Lion, not just the Lamb only. And this notion of Lamb-only is what many Christian men have been led to believe.

Listen carefully, it is a lie, and it is from the evil one. A properly organized Christian man should be able to be both Lamb and Lion. At one moment he could be reading the Word to his family in a quiet setting and in the next instant be killing a criminal home invader, and then, just as easily go right back to the Word as if nothing had happened.

At one instant he could be providing for his family at work, and in the next moment be passionately correcting a false teacher. That is the real Jesus we should be emulating, and not the caged, de-clawed, and feminized Jesus of so many churches. Lion and Lamb. That is our requirement!

How do you do this??

The first step is to stop being passive. Many Christian men fear conflict more than anything. Sometimes conflict is necessary. Sometimes it is mandatory. You need to be a leader...specially in your home, and that may require conflict. Many Christian men will not take up the role of leadership in their homes and that is wrong and sinful.

This fear of conflict and fighting is sick and certainly not of God. You may be called to fight an earthly enemy in mortal combat (I can teach you how to win that one) or you may be called to fight a spiritual enemy that would ask you to compromise. Be ready for either opportunity. With the former, train your body. With the latter, train the mind by reading the Word. Do not be misled and do not allow others to trample on your beliefs or on God.

God may call you to fight and to risk. Be ready.

Don't be a pumpkin boy...be a Christian Warrior, a man of valor and of God! Don't be afraid of the fight. The desire to be passive comes from fear. Here is what God says about fear-

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid, neither be dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you in all places where you go.

Its a great journey my friend. Take the first step. Nothing will be the same.

Unconditional Submission Is Wrong

Lets discuss the doctrine of unconditional submission. Or simply put, that God requires us to submit unconditionally to the governing powers, regardless of what they ask. I don't believe such a doctrine is biblical.

Many Christians are uncomfortable with the idea that they would ever have to refuse to obey a law, much less resist a government by force of arms, but that may be what is needed in some situations.

Rom 13:1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God.

Powers ordained by God are often interpreted to refer to many different positions. For example, a man has dominion over his family, a pastor over the Church, etc. Others consider this to mean "Government" exclusively. Both are correct to a point. That point is that leaders and higher authorities are emplaced by God (or allowed by God) to protect and promote the good (God's law). When they cease to do this, they are no longer of God. Where there is conflict, we stand on God's word as the basis of our beliefs and are no longer subject morally or ethically to do what the government says. God is the ultimate authority, and whatever we do must be in line with His will. As long as His will and the governments is the same, no problem. But when there is a difference, we ALWAYS stand on the word of God. God is sovereign and omnipotent and rules all.

Don't believe it? Consider Hitler. Would it have been proper for a Christian to have submitted to Hitler? Absolutely not. Consider something as minimal (in today's context) as King George's taxes on the American Colonies. When compared to today, few of us would even blink an eye about something so minor. Yet in those days it was enough to go to guns. And had American Patriots not resisted we would not now be a nation today. Today we see the glimmerings of anti-Christian laws (illegal to pray in school, illegal to invoke the name of Christ, etc.). How will you resolve to submit to that oh, Christian man?? Go along quietly or disobey?

The Bible is full of examples where good people of God directly disobeyed the orders of their ungodly kings and governing authorities.

Examples include the Hebrew midwives who disobeyed Pharaoh's order to kill babies in Exodus 1:16-17, the flight of Moses from Egypt after killing the Egyptian in combat, Rahab lying to the king in Joshua 2:4, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego disobeying the king in

Daniel 3:13-20, and Daniel disobeying the king in Daniel 6:10. And lets not forget Joseph fleeing to Egypt with Mary and Jesus in direct disobedience to Herrod in Matthew 2:14.

And our Lord Jesus was certainly not an unconditional submissive when He challenged the Pharisees, cleansed the Temple, and taught His people.

Clearly God does also allow evil men to come to power as chastisement for a people. Insofar as these men do not trample the word of God, or make it illegal to live as God commands us to live, we can continue temporarily under their control. (Consider Clinton, Hussein, and Chavez).

The moment they compel you by force (how else does ANY government get people to obey?) to deny the faith or compel you to do things contrary to God's will, the submission role is over and the sword of Luke 22:36 must come out to play.

Did you know the laws of our own civil government adopt this view? According to the Declaration of Independence, the "laws of nature and of nature's God" are laws higher than the laws of England (and, by implication, higher than the laws of any human civil government). The laws of nature are God's moral law written on the heart as the conscience, and the laws of nature's God are the laws of God revealed in the scripture.

The Declaration of Independence also says that it is not merely our right, but also our

duty, to throw off a civil government when that civil government, "by a long train of abuses and usurpations, shows that its goal is to reduce the people under absolute despotism."

Unconditional submission to anything or anyone except God Himself, amounts to idolatry. This includes good things as well as bad ones. Remember Peter's bold answer to the ruling Council:

Act 5:29 And Peter and the apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Seems very clear to me. So why do so many churches and so many pastors ignore this? One reason...it is easy. It is easy to simply go along. It is easy to not make waves. It is easy to simply bow the head and do as you are told.

I say NO!

The time will come soon when lines must be drawn and this ill-conceived and misinterpreted doctrine purged from the minds of believers. Under normal circumstances we should submit to just and necessary laws and rules, but when those same rules become unjust and unjust, we must make a choice.

It has been said at Warrior Talk's Christian Warrior forum that "the natural human tendency is to rebel unless given good reason to submit, and that God intends us to submit unless given good reason to rebel."

The Sword In Its "Proper" Place

We often hear from Christians that are uncomfortable with the concept of the Christian Warrior. They, fixated by the Lamb and ignorant of the Lion, point out the turning of the cheek, and the "live by sword-die by sword" argument.

First of all, Christ did not teach to discard the sword. Rather he taught the sword in its proper place, and that those whose only resource was violence would inevitably perish by it. Christ actually teaches us to be prepared to provide for our own security *vis a vis* the personal weapon of the day - the sword.

In Luke 22:36 Christ tells His boys to arm themselves ("But now," Jesus said, "whoever has a purse or a bag must take it; and whoever does not have a sword must sell his coat and buy one."). It is very clear that is what He meant when you read it in context.

His men came back advising they had two Kalashnikovs...err...I mean, "swords". He did not correct them! In fact He advised that two swords would be sufficient.

The "theologian commentaries" in my NKJV say this, "Misunderstanding Jesus' instructions in v. 36, the disciples indicated that they had weapons with which to fight."

Really Now??

The theologian commentators are interpreting and explaining what THEY want to interpret and explain, because they are uncomfortable with the idea that their "tender,

mild, domesticated nice guy" Savior would advocate sticking steel into another man.

But when we read of other cases where the Disciples had mistaken His teaching, Jesus was always quick and firm in correcting them.. Some examples –

Matthew 16:6-12 Jesus said to them, "Take care; be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

They started discussing among themselves, "He says this because we didn't bring any bread."

Jesus knew what they were saying, so he asked them, "Why are you discussing among yourselves about not having any bread? What little faith you have!

Don't you understand yet? Don't you remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand men? How many baskets did you fill?

And what about the seven loaves for the four thousand men? How many baskets did you fill?

How is it that you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? Guard yourselves from the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"

Then the disciples understood that he was not warning them to guard themselves from the yeast used in bread but from the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

So we see that the Disciples had made an error about His comparison of the wrong teachings to the yeast used in baking bread. And it is clear that it was in fact an illustration when one reads the entire context.

When the Disciples became concerned about bread, Christ did not allow them to continue in confusion.

And this one

Matthew 16:22-23 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "God forbid it, Lord!" he said. "That must never happen to you!"

Jesus turned around and said to Peter, "Get away from me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my way, because these thoughts of yours don't come from God, but from human nature."

Now why would our Lord correct His men so adamantly in two other instances and not do so when they brought two weapons, two swords to Him? Theologians can argue all they want in their attempts to conform scripture to their own world view, but they would still be wrong. When His men returned with two swords, the Lord did not correct his men, when He had corrected them many other times...why not?

The obvious...because they were not in error!

The sword was meant for physical protection, not specifically - as some commentators write - some sort of lofty symbolic spiritual precursor to the Bible. They were swords!

The sword was meant for fighting and likely killing evil men who would try to do the same to them in a fallen world. The sword was not to be relied upon exclusively, but rather kept in its proper place, for its proper use, and at the proper time.

Today a sword would be analogous to a pistol. So we might apply the scripture today that whoever has no pistol should sell his car and buy one. Or something like that. But lets keep looking to see where else this issue is discussed.

John 18:10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

John 18:11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

Luke 22:50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

Luke 22:51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

Matthew 26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

Matthew 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Matthew 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Matthew 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Christ did in fact tell Peter the Swordsman that those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. But in what context?

Consider the literal context. Christ was being arrested and surrounded. It was His mission to give himself up and be sacrificed. If His men stood and fought at that moment (on their own strength) they would have been killed by the superior numbers deployed against them. And if the enemy was resisted at that moment, would it have been possible for Christ to complete His mission?

Christ would not tell His men to arm themselves and later contradict His teachings. God is the same always and unchanging. (Malachi 3:6 For I *am* the LORD, I change not)I

Christ gave a few commands while He was with us in earthly form. Pastors make a big deal about the "loving your neighbor", and other "nice" lessons, but when it comes to this issue of the sword there is so much waffling and flip-flopping you'd think they went to the John Kerry school of ministry.

"Sword" is sword, in this context and it is very clear to all who read without agenda and are led by the Spirit.

But taking up the sword carries grave responsibilities that few men, let alone Christians, are comfortable with. It is far easier to be a pacifist and claim that the physical courage and faith needed for sword-wielding is somehow not right, or not "Christian". But you see, taking up the sword requires skill in its use, and thus discipline in acquiring the skill. And it requires courage to face enemies similarly armed. And of course faith.

The command from Luke 22 remains.

....and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Christ told His men to arm themselves, clearly and positively. We could make a convincing argument that these men were neither soldiers nor police, but rather common citizens, and that this is a mandate for those Christians who feel called to do so, to cultivate the possession of weapons and develop the skill-at-arms to use them for good. And moreover, that any Pastor, or law of man, or governing body that tries to prevent this is against God's word, and actually preventing us from pursuing our faith.

Luke 22:36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Luke 22:37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

Luke 22:38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Fighting Spiritual Warfare

Our ministry is focused on bringing the Word to men of action, if you will, warriors. How many of you warriors, when faced by a thug demanding your wallet by force, would quietly acquiesce? How many of you would mildly reach in your back pocket and pull out your wallet, eyes downcast, with nary a protest?

"The hell", you say!

You'd smash him into vegetable-like state! You'd draw your Glock and shoot him to the ground, or stab him into exsanguinated pallor! The human enemies on the earth would be well advised to choose someone else lest they harbor latent suicidal tendencies, yes?

But how many of us take a different and cowardly attitude when the attack is not a human one, but a spiritual one? How many are ready to fight to the death over a wallet, yet quietly go along with a spiritual temptation? War is war my friends, physical or spiritual...we were born and bred for it...or more correctly...to win it.

This spiritual warfare can be anything the Christian is struggling with from alcoholism to women, to anger. I'm no psychologist, but I do know the awesome power of God. "But the temptation of spiritual warfare is so strong", you say. "I cannot hope to win".

Coward!

Did I shock you? My ministry is as in your face as my gunfighting classes! I'm not here to hug you and sing Kooombaya while we smoke a joint and cry together like a couple of slovenly liberals. Oh no. I'm here to grab you by the shirt and show you our Christian Warrior heritage going back to Our Lord, Jesus the Warrior King Himself.

"Be strong and of good courage, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go". Remember? It was a command...a holy order for battle.

If an earthly enemy is strong what would you do? Why call for reinforcements of course!

I recall in my police days, we would call for assistance when we were outnumbered by bad guys. When a call for help came out, everyone went to help. I recall once I got on the radio and said that I had about twenty gang members surrounded with my shotgun. Even the helicopters came that night.

How much more help will your father, the Lord God of Hosts send to you when you ask His help?

It is in fact that simple. Is it easy? No..it is in fact not easy. A fight to the death is not easy, but the way to win is, in point of fact, simple. The same goes for spiritual warfare.

Take a stand. If the attack persists, call for help. Something like this -

"Lord, I am under attack and I need urgent help. Please come and help me now!"

Nothing flowery, or poetic. God doesn't give points for that, but He does give points for strong intense and faithful prayer. Like in physical combat - simple is better. To borrow and modify a phrase from our AK program - Its too simple to be religion.

God also gives points for faith. Want to know what makes a prayer like this work? I'll tell you. It takes the undying and fervent faith that God will not only listen, but that He will dispatch a legion of armed and angry angels to come to your help.

So stop giving your lunch money to the enemy without a fight. Watch him ran away from you in fear of your God. God says he will and I believe that. Put on the armor of God described in Ephesians, and take a stand against the spiritual attack.

And if the attack is overwhelming, ask God to send help. Then watch what happens!

Remember Joshua 1:9. We keep coming back to that, but it is appropriate. A Christian Warrior is strong and courageous in any battle earthly or spiritual, and has no fear, not of death nor of temptation, because his God is with him where ever he goes!!

On Liberalism And Christianity

I was watching MSNBC and a commentator was discussing how one of the "liberal" presidential candidates had announced that he would be invoking the name of Jesus in his speeches henceforth. The commentator noted how this fit right in as Christ was Himself a liberal.

After my coffee cup bounced off the television screen, I holstered my Glock, and wiped up the brew from my Sony big screen. The question that immediately came up was, "Can

A Christian Be A Liberal???"

Now us true bible believing, born again warriors know that Christ was no liberal in the modern sense of the word. For those of you who came in late please examine the prior chapters.

For clarity, we need to first define "LIBERAL". The dictionary meaning of liberal is -
lib-eral

1 a: of, relating to, or based on the liberal arts <liberal education> b archaic : of or befitting a man of free birth

2 a: marked by generosity : OPENHANDED <a liberal giver> b : given or provided in a generous and openhanded way <a liberal meal> c : AMPLE, FULL

3 obsolete : lacking moral restraint: LICENTIOUS

4: not literal or strict: LOOSE <a liberal translation>

5: BROAD-MINDED; especially: not bound by authoritarianism, orthodoxy, or traditional forms

6 a: of, favoring, or based upon the principles of liberalism b capitalized : of or constituting a political party advocating or associated with the principles of political liberalism; especially : of or constituting a political party associated with ideals of individual especially economic freedom, greater individual participation in government, and constitutional, political, and administrative reforms designed to secure these objectives

Interesting don't you think??

One would think, based on this definition, that liberalism was the greatest thing since sliced-bread. One would think that liberals were the last bastion of freedom on earth and that yes, we should all seek to be, "liberals".

However, we live in an age where a word's meaning changes with the generation. Who, for sample would think that "gay" means happy and light-hearted today?? Gay is used to refer homosexuals in popular society, yet most dictionaries define the word as something else [together. Such is the case with the term "liberal".

A liberal is a modern rendition of a socialist. A liberal wants to control people, and is anything but "freedom-loving". A liberal wants to force others to conform to their own personal secular world view. (Or to be conformed by force). "Liberal" is another name for Communist.

Don't believe me? Read the works of Karl Marx, Lenin, and Mao. I have. Then compare their thinking with the modern, liberal philosophy, and the political records of those who would claim the title.

Christ taught us freedom, and the responsibility that comes with it. He taught us faith and the trust in God that it develops. He taught many other things that the liberal-communists despise. Above all, that there is in fact a God, and that He is the supreme authority.

Liberals do not want us to be reliant on God, but on their government. Liberals want us dependant on them for what they will determine we need. This includes everything from security to spirituality, to economics...everything. Look at how they tax everyone and

everything. Look at how they seek to make us all dependant on their programs. "Want us to help you? Better not talk about God". "You don't need guns...we'll protect you"

Liberals want to remove God from every document and monument in our land

Look at the laws passed by liberals in the last few years. Is that the work of Christians?? Legalization of abortion, legitimizing of homosexual marriage, the erasing of God, and morality from everything in our daily life..

In ancient times, the liberals of today would have been carousing with Philistines, building golden idols, sacrificing their kids to Baal, and doing all those biblical nasties for which cities were flattened.

A true modern liberal is the same as communist. And a communist cannot be a Christian, there is no grey area in God's word. There is nothing open for interpretation. Its all there is black, red, and white. Read it and then compare that with the political and governmental record of modern American Liberalism.

We must remember that, and we must point it out every time a misguided brother mentions any leader or politician who claims to stand on Christian beliefs, yet whose actions are clearly different.

Christians Cannot Be Liberals

Christ's Birthday

First and foremost - Christmas is a birthday party. It has nothing to do with decorated conifers or out-of-shape old men in red suits. It is the birthday of Our Savior - The King Jesus. We celebrate it in His honor.

Today secularists want us to believe Christmas is about anything but Christ. And if anything is said about Jesus Christ at all, it is done in hushed whispers lest someone of a "different" belief be offended.

Well, here is my perspective on that. If anyone is offended by me saying MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!!, they need to get the hell of my country. Am I insensitive and intolerant? You bet I am. We should all be that way.

The only other time we see the Lord depicted at these times is as the infant in Mary's arms. You know the image. He is surrounded by cattle and shepards and Joseph and Mary...and of course the three kings.

"Holy infant so tender and mild" ...or so goes the song.

It usually engenders the same reaction some would have to a box full of puppies or a bag of kittens. You can almost hear the collective "Awwwww" of the koom-baya warm fuzzy marijuana puffing crowd.

There was much more to this birth on that night. One wonders if those present grasped its significance.

We give gifts today partly out of the mindless American tradition of spending, but also

to commemorate the gift Jesus gave us. The greatest gift of all... His life for ours.

And that is not all. It was also a call to do likewise. A call to follow Him into battle.

"Deny yourself - pick up your cross - and follow me".

This is no small thing, and not easily done by Pew Potatoes paying their spiritual insurance on Sunday morning, or by pumpkin boy nice guys in their Sunday ties. Not a small thing and not an easy thing. A Christian life is not a life of idle ease.

I recall my days in SWAT. You were not picked out of the blue...you asked to join and then prove you were up to the task. And by doing this, you acknowledged that you were fine with the extra work, the long hours, interruptions in the middle of the night, and of course...the danger. Specially the danger.

But you never worried about that much because you had a half dozen homicidal freaks of nature backing you up with German machineguns.

The Christian life is like that in a way except that Christ asks you to join Him. He doesn't paint it rosy like some of the koom-baya pastors of today who are ruled by filling the pews...and the money box. Quite to the contrary, Christ tells you up front about the extra work, the long hours, personal interruptions (although rarely via pager), and of course...the danger.

But you will have the Lord God of Hosts covering your six.

"Deny yourself - pick up your cross - and follow me".

Here is the mission -

Deny yourself. A Christian puts his brothers and sisters first. If there is not enough food, his brothers eat before he does.

Pick up your cross. The cross was Christ's mission. A dangerous deadly mission, but He was well up to the task. What is your mission? Do you accept it, or are you a chicken boy hiding safe and warm in bed? Are you man enough to follow the King of Kings??

Pick it up and move out!

Following Christ is something many talk about today. They give descriptions of every modern secular Christian virtue ever thought about by a nice guy convention. Following Christ means trying your utmost to be like Him. But be like the real Christ, the complete Christ. Christ, the in-your-face upstart revolutionary, not the domesticated Christ invented by seeker-friendly churches, described as "tender and mild".

Jesus challenges us today! He challenges us to DO likewise. And to BE likewise. And how we could change the world if we did!

Can you imagine the kind of nation we would have if Christian men really tried to be like Christ?! Even if only a few Christian men did that?!

Pick it up and move out!

"Holy infant so tender and mild"?

Little did they know.

On Loftiness

Sometimes we run into Christians that have nearly shut off from any interest in anything but spiritual matters.

We have criminals and terrorists running loose?

"Oh well, it has nothing to do with us godly people....God will protect us."

No money in the wallet, or food in the refrigerator?

"Oh well, God will feed us."

They are so focused on lofty spiritual issues that they will not lift a finger, and are of no use to anyone at all. They are willing to allow the world we have been entrusted with to fall into the hands of evil.

Now listen, I am not for one moment saying that God does not care about us or what we do, but neither does He want us to sit around like baby birds with open mouths waiting to be fed. He wants us to pray to Him, for blessings, and help, and for what we desire in our hearts, but then, if we can, He expects us to get up, get on our feet, and do something about it. "Faith has feet", or so the saying goes.

Do you know why the Israelites physically fought all those battles rather than sitting by reading while God smashed their enemies? Because God knows we need the battle. The battle, the struggle, cements our faith and the ensuing victory makes it real.

Worried about your family's safety or about their well-being? Here is what God says

1 Timothy 5:8 If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This means that its your job to feed, teach, protect and lead your family. Spiritually, emotionally, economically, and oh yes, not to forget, physically. That is your cross. Pick it up!

"But Gabe...its hard and heavy...and I will get splinters", you say.

Nonsense!

Cowboy up and do your job! Now listen. God did not make you to be a namby pamby pumpkin boy whose eyes well over with tears at the first sign of difficulty. He made you of sound mind and strong of spirit. He made you for combat in a world at war with evil and with the sons of evil.

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Now this is important. Providing for those entrusted to you...your family, is your job. You pray that God will make you strong to do your job...the job He has given to you. Part of providing is to provide for essentials. This means food, shelter, clothing, etc. Any mighty man of God feeds those entrusted to him before he feeds himself.

Providing also means protecting. Protecting is easy when the evil ones come. We pray that if that moment comes, we will be there to face them. But we may not be there. So part of your mission is educating your loved ones about the evil forces at work around us. Physical and not only spiritual. Do your little ones know there are evil men out there?

Providing also means leadership. Do you tell your family to live and act as God directs and then not follow your own teachings? You are the leader. Lead by example.

How?

Look at Christ...the real Christ, the Lion of Judah Christ that tells us to be strong and courageous! Be like Him and see how it changes your family.

Do not be so lofty and spiritually minded that you are of no use to anyone here on earth. Christ told us about that in Matthew 25 where He tells of the parable of the talents. Three men are entrusted by their master with money. The ones who care and nurture what they have been entrusted with are rewarded and pleasing to God.

The one who did nothing..well, look it up yourself, it doesn't go well for him. Let that not be us.

Mat 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

Christian Tolerance

Today we hear the word "tolerance" being thrown around Christian circles like a frisbee. For some, this means that we accept and embrace everyone and get along with them as good little Christians should. After all Christ was tolerant...wasn't He??

This is utter and total nonsense.

First, I want to discuss what tolerance is. *Tolerance is most definitely not "acceptance"*. For example, I may tolerate the communist liberal politicians that want to turn us into a welfare state. After all, this is America and everyone has the right to an opinion. But I do not, under any circumstances, accept them at all.

Similarly, I tolerate others whose lifestyles are totally and completely abhorrent to me, and I certainly would hope God leads them away from such things, but I most definitely do not "accept" them, "agree" that their ways are correct, nor do I choose to have any dealings with them.

Matthew 7:6 "Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you."

Tolerance means that we will not go and attack someone for thinking differently or for having a different opinion. But tolerance does not mean we have to like each other, accept each other, nor be friends.

In fact, it is perfectly acceptable to not like certain people without being "intolerant", or trying to destroy them. The people that rioted over cartoons in Denmark could take a lesson about that don't you think?

Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.

Living in peace with someone does not mean you are now buddies for life. Peaceful coexistence is not friendship. And, understand as well, there will in fact be times when you will not be able to live in peace.

Romans 12:9 Let love be genuine; abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good;

It doesn't sound like tolerating evil things is what we are called to do at all. In fact, "abhor" is a fairly strong word and quite far from "tolerate".

So try to live in peace, as much as depends on you, without compromising your beliefs and principles. Tolerating those with different opinions and ideas is fine, but it most certainly does not mean accepting such ideas and opinions as correct or proper. And once it gets into areas where the issue is truly evil, then tolerance is simply out of the question.

On Loving Enemies

In studying the literal Word we need to determine who is being spoken to, what about, and in what context. Only then will we get a picture of what the topic is really intended to teach. Moreover, when certain words are used in translation (like the all-inclusive "love" and "enemy" in the English language), a word study is also in order.

The concept that "All men are brothers" is a 20th century invention, and nowhere in the Bible does such a thing appear. Clearly there is a distinction between "the brethren" (i.e. believers, fellow Christians, fellow Jews, etc.) and non-believers. That is not say that non-believers are to be mistreated, or abused, but rather that believers should seek fellowship with, and give preference to, other believers. We are to try to live in peace with all men (as much as depends on us), but clearly we are not to have fellowship with anyone gratuitously practicing evil, nor to "love them".

Matthew 5:43-44 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.' But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

In the text, Christ is speaking primarily to Jews, and admonishing them not to fight among themselves (something they were famous for doing). If we read a few verses before 5:43-44, the context of the discussion includes holding grudges, adultery, taking oaths, insults, legal proceedings, etc. In essence, social issues that can destroy a community.

Christ was very specific in all things, and had he been talking about something else, such as rapes, murders, robbery, etc., He'd have used examples more in line with physical attacks (and no, a slap or strike to the face is not the same). Repeatedly He mentions "brothers". That "brothers" should not fight.

Matthew 5:22 -"But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without cause, shall be in danger of the judgment".

"Without cause" is a phrase that is very easily forgotten by some pastors, yet there it is. This infers that is acceptable to be angry...if there be cause. Petty disputes are not sufficient cause.

Now here is the issue. All Scripture is valid. God does not change. So if God sanctioned the destruction of evil men at the hands of righteous men in the Old Testament, when Israel was a mighty power, He certainly did not change His mind in the New Testament, when Israel was a conquered nation.

As far as the definition of "enemy". In the Old Testament, Joshua, David, and many others, killed more Philistines and other divisive and evil legions than you can shake a stick at. Yet God was not displeased with this.

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" ...if they are your brothers.

Later in the New Testament, Paul mentions to the Corinthians -

2 Corinthians 6:14 - Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together?

Very interesting. How can you love that which you abhor? How can a Christian love anyone who is evil? We are certainly not expected to love evil.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Now that brings up an interesting point. The Devil is the enemy of all. Big time. Christ would never suggest we must love him, and clearly does not do so here. God is one, and not duplicitous. He will not confuse us by telling us to love an enemy we are supposed to abhor.

You can't abhor something or someone, and yet love them. To think that you somehow can is a 20th century invention that ranks right up there with MTV. Yet when you read on, and the discussion is about brethren (all believers are saints in the New Testament), here is what is said -

Romans 12:13-16distributing to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with rejoicing ones, and weep with weeping ones; minding the same thing toward one another, not minding high things, but yielding to the lowly. Do not be wise within yourselves.

The message is not to love everyone unconditionally regardless of who they are and what they do. Love your neighbor, your brother and fellow believer. Try to live in peace with ALL MEN, be examples to ALL MEN, but do not seek fellowship with unbelievers. As far as what is evil, and who is evil...well, the message is clear.

On Revenge

First of all, we either believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, or we do not. That includes ALL scriptures Old and New testaments. If you don't then none of this may make any sense. If you do, as I do, believe that the Bible is in fact the inspired Word of God, then remember that the Word of God is just that.

What does the Bible actually say? The commentaries written by men, learned as they

may be, are still only the words of men. Test the commentaries. If they agree with the message of God, then fine. If they do not, then always go with God's actual message.

Remember that though something may be acceptable in the Bible, there may be societal costs. Similarly, simply because something is illegal by government statute does not make it a sin or evil in and of itself. I hate to belabor the point, but Romans does not call us to submit unconditionally to laws and governments.

Having said that, let's examine the issue at hand.

Is it wrong for a Christian to be angry? I say it is not. And, by extension it is clearly NOT wrong to kill under the right circumstances as evidenced by the true commandment which tells us not to murder. These circumstances include such events as war, and self-defense.

I think that the real question here is not one of anger, nor one of killing, but rather one of killing in anger specifically for purposes of revenge.

Is revenge wrong? That is the real issue.

Who do we have as examples? Many godly men have shown anger from Moses to The Lord Himself. Anger is an emotion given to us by God.

I want to look at the example of Samson, who not only killed in anger...but also in revenge.

Judges 14:6 And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he tore it (a young lion) as he would have torn a kid; and nothing was in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

Judges 14:19 And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave changes of garments to them who told what the riddle meant. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

Judges 15:7-8 And Samson said to them, Though you have done this, yet I will be avenged of you, and after that I will stop. And he struck them hip and thigh with a great slaughter. And he went down and lived in the top of the rock Etam.

Judges 15:14-15 He came to Lehi, and the Philistines shouted against him. And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and the cords on his arms became as flax that has been burned with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.

Judges 15:18-19 And he was very thirsty and called upon Jehovah and said, You have given this great deliverance into the hand of Your servant. And now shall I die with thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God cut open a hollow place and water came out there. And he drank, and his spirit came again, and he revived. Therefore, its name is called Fountain of the Praying One, which is in Lehi to this day.

Later, when he is captured and blinded by the Philistines, he asks God for vengeance.

Judges 16:28 And Samson called to Jehovah and said, O, Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray You, and strengthen me, I pray You, only this once, O God, so that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

Samson both felt anger and strength when the Spirit came upon him. He also carried

out personal vengeance, apparently with God's blessing. What gives??

Here is a point that I saw. Throughout the Bible, the withholding of revenge seems targeted to Hebrew vs. Hebrew. Thus passages such as:

Leviticus 19:18 You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am Jehovah.

Then later we read about Samson. Thus I am making an observation, although not arriving at any conclusions, that revenge may not always be a sin. The Hebrews had in place matters for resolving these issues that were presumably just.

If the transgressor was a Philistine or an Amalekite, such remedies were not available.

Romans 12:17-21 Repay no one evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as far as is in you, being in peace with all men. Not avenging yourselves, beloved, but giving place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him. If he thirsts, give him drink. For in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Apparently, vengeance is not necessarily wrong. There is a difference between just and godly vengeance and evil revenge. Are such things always in God's hands alone? I don't know.

An example. If a man killed your family, and in order to avenge them, you kill his family, is that right or wrong?

Clearly wrong as his family had nothing to do with his evil crime of murder.

Justice would be better served by killing the murderer himself to triply to prevent him from repeating his actions, as an example of what will happen if someone does such a thing, and to satisfy the grief of the victim. That would be justice.

Whether it would be appropriate by man's law or not is an entire other issue and we should not mix the two discussions.

Some would say that maybe God has plans to convert the murderer and make him do mighty works for the body of the church. Possible? Sure, God can do anything. In such a case then God will save the presently evil person. I think we can rationalize things either way. In such cases, as Gen. Schwartkopf said, "Forgiveness is God's job, ours is to arrange the meeting".

In a proper society, the government would schedule said meeting, and in day's gone by it was done with haste.

Another argument is that one should always abrogate such things to the governing authority. Living in civilized society demands that of us. So the legal (man's law) process would be to report the murderers of your family and leave their punishment in the hands of the legal system, and accept whatever results come out of the court room.

Now let's look at the same situation in say, the Sudan, or Afghanistan. A place without laws or any true godly governing authority. Would it be proper for you to act in anger and punish the evil men yourself or not? In such cases, I say yes.

So we must answer the question in two ways. One, is it correct to do that? Then, is it legal to do that? The two answers may not always be in agreement. One thing we can be

in agreement is that we pray never to have to make such decisions.

My intent is simply to follow what Christ wants us to do here on earth before He returns. There may be a distinct difference between what God allows and what the law of man's society allows. God's law would allow you to enter a temple of God and beat the h*ll out of those who are blaspheming the Word. Do that in downtown Phoenix and you go to jail. Thus in our modern society one must tread carefully and accomplish things in sometimes less obvious ways.

I believe Samson's only sin was to think himself the one who accomplished those early deeds rather than God. His actions toward the Philistines were not only justified, but an example of how God will stand by us in times of need, and in the case of Christian warriors, in battle.

As far as our modern standards, they are simple - To Love the Lord your God with all your mind, soul and strength. Secondly to love your neighbor as yourself. Period. When one neighbor decides to be evil, he must be dealt with...by government, hopefully, but by forces outside of government if needed.

On Forgiveness

Previously, we discussed the issue of Revenge, and what it really means. I search things out for myself and do not take any man's word for what the Word of God says. What a theologian may tell me serves as a guideline, but the material is there for all to research and study for themselves.

This time I have been studying a counter concept to revenge/justice...forgiveness.

Luke 17:3-4 Take heed to yourselves. And if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if seven times of the day he sins against you, and seven times of the day turns to you saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.

If you brother sins against you, you are allowed to rebuke. There are Christian leaders who would tell you that you can't even do that. Yes you can! Rebuke takes on many forms. A man accuses you of something you did not do, set him straight with words. If he physically touches you roughly, rebuke him with greater physical emphasis! Rebuke is simply a counter or a defense...in context.

However, if he returns to you, repenting of his offense, you are to forgive him.

This is very interesting. I had not seen this before in my studies. Similarly, if we wish God to forgive us, we must repent from sinful behavior. Forgiveness is not automatic is it? So if God will not forgive us unless/until we repent, what does that tell us about our forgiveness of others?

An important note - Just as pride and arrogance are different things (pride is fine, arrogance is not), and killing is different from murder, not forgiving is different from holding a grudge. Not forgiving a man who has wronged you, and is unrepentant, may be fine as long as his wrong does not consume your every waking moment, and your thoughts are filled with getting even.

Recently, I received a phone call from a gentleman who had been instrumental in some hardships that my family and I had endured a few years ago. I must say that prior to being a Christian, had I met this man on the street, his fate would have been a painfully short one and he would have no need of further birthdays. However, God has a way of changing things, does he not. I'd been studying the issue of what forgiveness is and admit, I was struggling with what it meant.

The gentleman on the phone was almost in tears. I immediately recognized who he was and my battle program began to engage. However, I got that elbow in the ribs from the Holy Spirit. You know the one...the one you get when the still small voice can't get through thick heads.

This man apologized to me for what he had done. He said he had been wrong to do what he did and that it had been eating at him for almost five years now. His life had not been as blessed as mine has since those dark days. He told me many other things. But it became clear - and if he repents, forgive him!

I could not believe my own words to him...but especially when I said, "Forget about it."

Now I am not bringing this up to show anyone how spiritual I am, because I certainly am not. I am a prickly sinner, just as the rest of you. But it became very clear that if your enemy repents (truly repents) you are commanded to forgive him. If you do not do this, you are sinning. If he does not repent, you are not required to forgive him. You can certainly do so, or you can simply "let it go" as some would say, but you are not required to forgive as you would be if he repented and asked for forgiveness.

Now that does not eliminate consequences that may arise from what evil an enemy has done. An example, exaggerated perhaps, would be if Bin Ladin pops up somewhere in tears holding a bible and asks for forgiveness for killing thousands.

We would be required to forgive him....right before we shoot him right in the face.

Overcoming Fear

Joshua is one of my favorite bible figures. Born in the slavery of Egypt, he climbed to the leadership of his nation in wartime. With God's help, he did some incredible things.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you where ever you go."

Joshua 1:9

Many times, my old team mates and I discussed things like the nature of fear. These were all very philosophical discussions as even admitting that one of us was afraid would not have been acceptable in that environment. At that time, and in that place, admitting fear was seen as a weakness. Admitting that you are experiencing the emotion of fear is not a bad thing. Reveling in the foggy miasma of terror, and panic, however, is a very bad thing. Alas, many in our profession of arms...specially those on the public

payroll, seem to regard this as some badge of honor. Reveling in panic and fear is not honorable at all. Nevertheless, all humans will experience the emotion of fear at one time or another. We must never let this emotion overcome us. Rather, we, with God's help, must overcome its effects.

What are we afraid of? Some will quickly reply that they are afraid of "death". I think that what many men-at-arms fear is not death, but rather the unknown. The unknown outcome is the uncertainty in every endeavor that brings the greatest concern of all. In the uncertainty exists the possibility of failure, and truly, failure is what we fear about the unknown.

It is that last unmanageable and uncontrollable slice of uncertainty, and the possibility of failure that we bring to the Lord in great focus in our prayer.

The last couple of issues focused on prayer and its ever-present utility to the man-at-arms. This time I want to discuss the element that fuels that prayer - faith. And also, as the title suggests, its terminating effects on fear. Developing a fear-stopping faith is an essential step in the spiritual development of the Christian man-at-arms.

Faith comes from trust. When we pray, we have an expectation that God will see us through the most dangerous of events, and that He will be with us during the trip. Whatsoever His will for us is, we are certain that He is with us, protecting us.

The enemy seeks to undermine our faith and trust in God with doubt and uncertainty. Tactically, doubt and uncertainty are two of our greatest dangers. Spiritually, they are our greatest dangers as well. These two things make up some of those "fiery darts" that Paul spoke of in Ephesians. The darts of doubt, if left unchecked, will undermine our trust and faith in the Lord.

To combat these two termites, we turn to the complete belief in the word of the Lord to Joshua.

Be strong and of good courage
do not be afraid nor be dismayed
for the Lord your God is with you where ever you go.

Joshua was a warrior's warrior, conquering the powerful kingdoms that surrounded Israel well into his advanced years. As a comparison, at the age when most modern generals pass their days playing golf, Joshua would still have been out on the battlefield doing God's work. He had the faith in God's promise that overcame the debilitating effects of fear.

Pray - have faith - trust God - Act.

We must be confident in the love of Our Father and that He has our interest in mind as long as we are operating justly and in His will. Being confident in that, and His provisions, that come from His love, we need not fear anything.

His love brings us peace. His peace casts out torment.
Without torment there can be no fear.

"Be Strong and of Good Courage!"

Pride, Ego, And The Christian Warrior

Ok, here's one to spike your blood pressure, and for the edification and discussion of my brother teachers and brothers-in-arms.

Let's talk about ego. Ego, along with Pride, is one of those words, like "gay", "liberal", and others, that has taken on outside meanings other than the dictionary.

Webster says ego is - "The conscious and permanent subject of all psychical experiences, whether held to be directly known or the product of reflective thought; -- opposed to non-ego."

OK, not so bad. But wait - there's more....

"1: an inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others [syn: egotism, self-importance] 2: your consciousness of your own identity [syn: self] 3: (psychoanalysis) the conscious mind"

To understand "ego" let's look at pride. Now understand that pride is a good thing, while excessive pride is not. Read on.

Pride - n 1: a feeling of self-respect and personal worth [syn: pridedness] [ant: humility] 2: satisfaction with your (or another's) achievements; "he takes pride in his son's success" 3: the trait of being spurred on by a dislike of falling below your standards [ant: humility] 4: a group of lions

So far so good. Without ANY pride or ego we would not brush our teeth, exercise or eat right, and never use deodorant. We would be no better than a bunch of smelly unwashed drug-smoking peace-protestors at the latest garbage can love-in.

Unchecked pride gets out of hand -

5: unreasonable and inordinate self-esteem (personified as one of the deadly sins) [syn: superbia] v 1: be proud of; "He prides himself on making it into law school" [syn: plume, congratulate] 2: be proud of; "She prides herself on her son" 3: pride or congratulate (oneself) for an achievement [syn: preen, congratulate]

Pride is fine as long as it is not unreasonable, or excessive. Like most things, extremes are fatal. We don't want to become the overstuffed epitome of pomposity, but neither do we wish to be the ego-less garbage can dweller who cares about nothing and no one. When pride and ego become extreme, they become selfishness and arrogance.

Arrogance - \Ar"ro*gance\, n. [F., fr. L. arrogantia, fr. arrogans] The act or habit of arrogating, or making undue claims in an overbearing manner; that species of pride which consists in exorbitant claims of rank, dignity, estimation, or power, or which exalts the worth or importance of the person to an undue degree; proud contempt of others; lordliness; haughtiness; self-assumption; presumption.

So while it is acceptable to be proud of oneself and one's accomplishments...to a certain degree, and to be ego-conscious enough to take pride in ones' ability, appearance, etc. It is not acceptable to go too far in this. Pride is fine, Arrogance is not.

Just where is that "fine line"? I don't know. I (dare I say it) pride myself in trying to never cross that line. We all know times in our lives when we not only crossed that river, but actually set up a fire base on the other side. We also know men in the profession of

arms that have built mansions with billboards on that side of the river.
Arrogance or pride? What side of the river are you on?

On Leadership

In the Old Testament, God assigned "judges" to lead Israel. These are the heroes of the faith. They fought battles, killed enemy fighters and kings, prophesied, and acted as examples to the rest of the people. Sometimes, like Samson and Gideon, they stumbled (being after all men), but they got back up on their feet with faith and led God's people.

Today, we have lots of managers, but few leaders. We could use a few good leaders from politics to the church. But instead, we have managers. A manager tells his underlings what to do. A leader says "follow me"kinda like Jesus did.

But a leader has a great responsibility....

Luke 12:48 For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

A leader must lead correctly, and in the right direction. If he does not, God will not be happy with his performance. Truly, to whom much is given, from him much will be required.

A leader must lead correctly. He must say "follow me" and not "go and do". In the church sense, he must lead in accordance with the word of God and not in accord with the conventions of man.

He must not compromise in order to get along, or to fill the pews. God's word is God's word and must never be compromised for the convenience of man.

At home a leader must also be a spiritual leader and a physical leader and protector. He must say, "Do as I do", and mean it! Never compromising what is right for convenience. That is the "cross" of the leader. He must be an example as well as a teacher. Not perfect, but perfectly relying on and pointing toward Christ. Not everyone is called to be a leader, but for those that are, there is a special crown waiting for them at the last trumpet. He may not be perfect, but he must be faithful. The cost of not being faithful is too high.

Matthew 18:6 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Mark 9:42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

Luke 17:2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

I wonder how many of today's church leaders will be wearing millstones at the last

sound of the trumpet. Let that never be one of us. Let us pray with all our hearts that God makes us alert and strong...and wise, so that we can be good teachers and good leaders...at home, in the church, and in the world.

Leadership Case Study #1 - Ehud

This will be a difficult lesson for many. It has to do with the individual and his call to act. This is the story of Ehud in Judges.

Let's jump into the middle of the story. Because of their transgressions against God, the evil Moabite King Eglon, with the help of the Amalekites and Ammonites defeated Israel in battle and captured it. The Israelites were forced to serve Eglon for 18 years. Now that doesn't sound so bad you might think. The Ammonites, Amalekites and Moabites were some of the most cruel and disgusting people of the ancient world and "serving them" was quite a punishment.

Judges 3:15 But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.

So once again we see the Israelites crying out to God for deliverance. Prayer came first. Interesting to note that it mentions "present". Rather it was probably tribute that the Israelites were forced to pay to Eglon.

The thing to consider is that God raised up a deliverer. The Israelites did not vote in an election, nor was he sworn in and given a badge. God raised him up. Moreover, God didn't sweep His holy hand and change everything by divine power, He sent someone.

That is how many Christians today think things get done. Just pray and then go sit around eating ice cream and wait for God to make something happen.

Not hardly.

God often has used men to get things done. He expects us to get our hands dirty...and sometimes even bloody.

Also, how exactly did God raise him up? I expect Ehud was a godly man who prayed to God for guidance. It does not say this, but one can infer it by reading about the others in Judges.

God empowered Ehud with a holy passion for what needed to be done.

Judges 3:16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

Now this makes it sound that Ehud was acting on his own doesn't it. If it had simply said "then Ehud made him a dagger", we would assume it was sanctioned by those in authority above him. "But Ehud....." The "But" changes the tone.

Ehud conceals his dagger inside his clothes and visits the king. Delivers the tribute and then look what happens.

Judges 3:19 But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.

He uses a ruse to get the king alone.

Judges 3:20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.

Judges 3:21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:

So lets get this right. Ehud is raised by God to deliver his people so he uses a ruse to get close to the king. This tactical deception allows him to get within stabbing distance, alone, and he is able to assassinate the oppressor.

Judges 3:26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

Judges 3:27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

Judges 3:28 And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.

Judges 3:29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.

Judges 3:30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

So by one man's individual action, an entire people are saved. I'll bet very few churches ever talk about old Ehud these days. There is no soft, fuzzy seeker-friendly Christianity or liberal Judaism in Ehud. Ehud is a man driven by what needs to be done and with risk to his own life sets forth, with God's help, to get it done. We could learn a great deal from him today.

Leadership Case Study #2 - Gideon

We first read of Gideon at a time when the people of Israel had once again turned from God. The Lord allowed them to fall into the hand of Midian.

When we read of these Old Testament Kingdoms, we have no understanding of the cruelty and evil that came with them. They would have made a modern day dictator like Amin or Hussein look like a stand-up comedian. In any case, the Midianites oppressed the Israelites greatly and they cried out to the Lord for help.

Now here is the interesting thing. Gideon was not a warrior. Gideon was a Joe Six-pack of the day. Why did God pick him? To show the Israelites that it was God who had saved them and not a "Great Warrior of Renown". The Lord sent His messenger to Gideon.

Judges 6:13 And Gideon said to him, "Pray, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this befallen us? And where are all his wonderful deeds which our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Mid'ian."

This does not mean Gideon was faithless, he was simply doing what we do today was he not? We all have doubt and we all ask for "confirmation from God".

Judges 6:14-16 And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Mid'ian; do not I send you?"

And he said to him, "Pray, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manas'seh, and I am the least in my family."

And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall smite the Mid'ianites as one man."

With some reluctance, and a request for signs that God was truly with him, (We can almost picture The Lord God of Hosts rolling His eyes over Gideon's reluctance) Gideon finally accepted his calling as a Mighty Man Of Valor for The Lord. (Judges 6:17-22).

Gideon's first attack was quiet and stealthy; under cover of darkness, Gideon and ten of his warriors destroyed the people's altar of Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole that had been erected beside it (Judges 6:25-27).

It was a first step and often, faith begins like a small fire as it did with Gideon.

This small attack caused a stir and the people of the area called for Gideon's death. But Gideon's father replied, "Will you contend for Ba'al? Or will you defend his cause? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down."

Baal, being a false god, of course did nothing, but the Mid'ianites and the Amal'ekites and the people of the East came together, and crossing the Jordan they encamped in the Valley of Jezreel intent on putting down the insurrection.

Judges 6:34 But the Spirit of the LORD took possession of Gideon; and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiez'rites were called out to follow him.

Gideon gathered about 22,000 warriors, truly an amazing force. Yet he still sought to make sure with God.

Judges 6:36-40 Then Gideon said to God, "If thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as thou hast said."

And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.

Then Gideon said to God, "Let not thy anger burn against me, let me speak but this once; pray, let me make trial only this once with the fleece; pray, let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew."

And God did so that night; for it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

Gideon, knowing that God was in fact with him, went forth to do battle. But God kept whittling his forces down to a mere 300 men. One must ask why.

Simply put - The worse the odds, the greater the glory. The glory and honor in this case, were God's.

That night God said to Gideon, "Arise, go down against the camp; for I have given it into your hand. But if you fear to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant; and you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp."

Gideon snuck into the enemy camp to spy and found them afraid and in great disorder. When Gideon saw all of this he thanked the Lord and returned to his own camp and said, in essence, "Let's Roll".

And so He did; the 300 Israelites obliterated an army of 120,000 Midianites and drove the invaders back beyond the Jordan.

Like Ehud. Gideon was called to battle for God. Although the Bible does not detail Ehud's discourses with God, it does so in detail with regards to Gideon. Gideon was unsure and asked for confirmation of God. God gave it. The striking thing was that eventually Gideon began to trust the Lord after each small victory. Until he came to the realization in the enemy camp that the Lord is faithful and keeps His word. Truly, if God is with us, who can ever stand against us.

On Discipline

At the Christian Warrior Forum, the issue of Pornography was brought up. I was not surprised to see the discussion. Often, this is considered "unimportant" by many. But since this forum is devoted to the Christian Warrior Section, it is in fact - important. So rather than simply ignore the issue hoping it goes away, we attack.

First I want to point to a few scriptures -

1 Corinthians 10:23 Someone may say, "I'm allowed to do anything," but not everything is helpful. I'm allowed to do anything, but not everything encourages growth.

OK...For every common man...maybe not so much an issue. But a Christian Warrior is no common man. His requirements in life are not the same as those of others. He doesn't need to get their approval...his calling is higher than the opinions or approval of others. So to try to convince an adamant non-believer why something is a concern for the Christian Warrior is a waste of time at best, and an exercise in frustration.

We men like to look at naked women. It is in our programming...just like we like fast cars and guns. I like a good bottle of wine, a fast machine (although not at the same time), and machineguns. But these things do not control my life, and I can take them or leave them at any time. Self-control is the foundation upon which wisdom is built.

Like all normal men, I really like naked women. But I do not allow their image to control me. I appreciate a nice looking woman and I can't help but look, but I don't gawk at her with my tongue hanging on the floor dripping saliva all over the tiles. If that is you, you are weak and need to change.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Stay away from sexual sins. Other sins that people commit don't affect their bodies the same way sexual sins do. People who sin sexually sin against their own bodies.

Don't you know that your body is a temple that belongs to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit, whom you received from God, lives in you. You don't belong to yourselves.

You were bought for a price. So bring glory to God in the way you use your body.

A Christian Warrior's eye should bounce off an alluring image. It is a matter of self-control, and a fight that all men fight. Some choose not to fight too much. Christian Warriors should not allow those images to control their lives. Simple as that. Will we always succeed? Nope, but if that were not the case we would not need the Lord Jesus Christ would we?

Be strong gentlemen.

The Warrior's Cross

As Christians we spend a great deal of time in study about the teachings of our Lord in reference to "Picking Up Your Cross." Often, the presumption in Bible commentaries is that a "cross" is some sort of an unpleasant or painful test or burden for a Christian. As Christians...particularly Christian Warriors, we need to look beyond this meaning of the cross to its meaning as a calling or mission to us today. Think of it as a test or a challenge from the Lord.

The cross was certainly intended as the most horrific of punishments by the Romans. It must have truly been a truly ugly way to die. Nevertheless, the cross was Our Lord's mission. He went willing to the cross to set us free from our well-deserved penalty. Thus the cross, among other things, was Jesus Christ's mission on earth. To us, to pick up our cross signifies an example...accepting our mission, or our calling.

There are many missions in the church body. Some Christians are called to be teachers. Others are called to be pastors, prophets or evangelists. Some of us are also called to be warriors. That is the cross that God has put in front of us.

Think of yourself standing just outside of a shopping mall or a school when the shots from an active shooter ring out. As a warrior, God has put a challenge in front of you. "Run and save yourself, says the enemy. What would Christ do? He would advance boldly to the sound of the guns and take out the minion of evil sent to kill the innocents. Are you up to the task? Are you strong enough to pick up THAT cross? Are you strong enough with the help of the Lord God of Hosts?

In conversations with a brother, who is also a Pastor, he told me that in a recent conference they were asked what their "cross" was. He said his particular cross was to die protecting his flock - if he had to, to kill an evil man who would come to harm his flock - if he must, and to be an example of God's love and strength at such times. Needless to say, and sadly, many in attendance had no idea how to take that.

In Luke 22:36-38, Our Lord advised His men to go out and buy swords. He mentioned swords specifically - they were to sell stuff and get a sword if they currently didn't have one. Two of them returned with a pair of swords, to which Jesus replied, "It is enough". Thus "some" of us are called to do more than simply provide for our family's protection (a responsibility of ALL Christian men).

Some of us, roughly 15% of us, are called to take the sword in hand and stand ready to physically defend the church. We may be called to die protecting those who cannot protect themselves. We may also be called to kill an evil man to protect others. Both cases are moral and biblically appropriate at the given time.

How do we pick up that cross and carry it today? Do we have to enlist in the army? Must we all become police officers, or reserve deputies? No. Neither of the Apostles who returned to Our Lord with swords was officially in any man's army or police force. They were civilian fishermen of all things!

Any man can take up that cross if he's called to do so by studying the fighting systems of our modern day and being prepared to effectively resist evil men with moral physical violence, as well as with faithful and spiritual steadfastness, relying on God's strength for victory.

We don't do much with swords today, but a man called to this would study the pistol, which is the best "defensive" tool today. He may study other firearms as well...just in case. He would study the knife, as well as unarmed defensive methods. He would not obsess about it, but he would keep himself strong and alert in the event that his calling was put to the test. See Psalm 144:1.

Truly we fight against "principalities and powers" as Paul notes in Ephesians 6, but often those principalities and powers take human form and must be resisted physically as well as spiritually, with God's help, by those who are called to pick up the sword, and utterly destroyed. Destroyed not only as an act of good will to the good, but as an example to them that evil can and must be resisted.

The warrior's cross means to be prepared to fight evil men, and even to kill or to die in the act of that resistance, out of love for the innocent, and with God's divine help, protecting those who are called to do gentler things in the Lord's name.

A Prayer Before Battle

Who can forget the words of Mel Gibson in the movie *The Patriot*, as he hunkered down behind a tall tree, his buckskin image bristling with tomahawks, muzzle loading rifles and knives.

About to embark on an 18th Century Hostage Rescue, against an entire rifle squad of veteran British Soldiers who had kidnapped his eldest son, with only two little boys as back up, Gibson's character makes a warrior's plea to his God.

"Lord...make me fast and accurate!"

Many years earlier, on a cold and wet December night, I had prayed a similar prayer as I stood alone in the rain with my shotgun outside a 7-11 store waiting for three armed robbers that had just murdered the clerk. Just like God had answered Gibson's character's prayer, He also answered my hasty prayer that night.

"Lord...make me fast and accurate".

In our self-centered, self-worshipping society, where the defining word of fighting men is self-reliance, the very idea of prayer to our God before combat may seem to be a silly anachronistic thing. There may be other things that keep us from praying in those times. Some men may be simply ashamed of their faith. Others may think that God has no place in righteous combat. One correspondent wrote that he didn't think it was proper to pray for victory in a fight since God did not condone combat. What a mistake we make when we think like that. .

First of all, God does not disallow combat. God teaches us that combat may not be the first resort, but He certainly does not tell us that it is *never an option*. Quite to the contrary, as is seen many times in the Bible, justified combat (and subsequently its lethal results) are not sinful in any way. And might I say, these actions might not only be justified, but they may well be a moral requirement in some cases.

"He teaches my hands to make war, so that my hands can bend a bow of bronze. (2 Samuels 22:35). "

So where does prayer fit into all of this, you ask. God tells us to pray for our needs. He tells us that He will hear us, and that He will answer us. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God (Philippians. 4:6)".

He teaches us to trust Him, and to rely on Him for all things. "Therefore I say to you, whatever you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24)" I have personally had too many prayers answered to discount its power, or to say that His answers were mere coincidence. Quite simply, prayer causes God to take special notice of your situation and causes things to happen.

Now by prayer, I don't mean some canned little ditty that you learned back in the halcyon days of a Sunday school class. I mean a strong heartfelt appeal for divine help in times of trouble. "The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16)". Prayer does not need to be long and eloquent to be effective. You can think a short prayer, like the one we talked about earlier, in less time than it took you to read this sentence. No body will hear it, but God will hear it. He will hear it, and He will answer you.

Now think about it for a moment. We pray for our finances to be in order. We pray for our families to be strong and united. We pray for our children and family members. We pray for ourselves too, in the areas of wisdom, patience, career guidance, etc. But do we pray when our lives are once again in the balance...life and death separated by a breath. There we are about to jump out of that C-130 into the enemy-occupied night. There we are driving Code-3 to a murder-robbery in progress. Do we pray to our God for success in our very real and impending combat? If not, perhaps we should.

We can well imagine King David's parched and thirsty lips praying for God's deliverance as he stood with only a slingshot (talk about minor calibers!) facing the threatening, belligerent, well-armed and obviously superior fighter, Goliath. Or Joshua's silent prayer as he led his people forward against unbelievable odds, but trusting fully, just as God had directed.

Won't the God who created you work by giving you the necessary speed, accuracy, or strength, in the times of need ? I believe He will...and has.

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything *according to His will*, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)."

The key phrase is "*according to His -will*". How many of us pray according to our own will? To pray according to God's will takes trust in Him. This is difficult for many of us, because we do not want to let go of the conflict to God's hand. Rather, we want to hold onto it. The second thing we need to do is to know God's will. The only way to do this is to know God.

Think of it in the terms of a child and a parent. Without the parent being present, and without asking specifically, the child has a pretty good idea about what the parents would want in any given situation. This is because the child knows the parent intimately. When we know God in that way, we can pray according to His will. The way we get to know God that way is by reading the Word, and through prayer.

Can we know everything about God's will? No. God's ways are higher than ours. He has plans for us that only He can know. What we can be assured of is that we can know God's purpose to the degree He wants us to know. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways, My ways, says the Lord.(Isaiah 55:8)"

As far as combat - is your victory in God's will? For this to happen, your endeavors must be righteous and for a moral reason. If this is the case, and it is His will that you dominate the enemy, He may work a miracle through your skills. Remember David. He will give you the resources that you need to be victorious, and fulfill His will.

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us".
Romans 8:31

The Christian Warrior's Prayer

Many American Christians are caught in the growing cycle of spiritual relativism. You know the line - "Everyone is right, and no one is wrong", "We all worship the same god", and other such nonsense. The problem is that so many either do not know any better, or are purposely misled by unscrupulous teachers that these ideas actually take hold and begin to be accepted as truth. Its no surprise since the bible and prayer are virtually outlawed in schools and in the centers of our nation's justice.

Recently at my forum Warrior Talk, there was a discussion about an event that took place on an airline as it was readying take-off. Apparently a group of belligerent Muslims passengers on board began a loud, and extremely anti-American conversation, complete with shouts of "Allah Akbar" during their "performance". I say "performance" because clearly this was some attempt at "emotional terrorism".

It worked. Predictably, many passengers were frightened by this, and although the disruptors were removed from the flight before it took off, they gave rise to fear in the empty hearts of the passengers. As it turned out, nothing physical happened, but it is clear that the objective of the performance and chant was to emotionally terrorize the other passengers, many who were Americans. Some I expect were probably Christian as well.

The Muslim outrage was in the headlines for several days. "Imams removed from plane for praying", was what it said.

Liberal media personalities took offense at the blatant discrimination and violation of the Constitutional rights of the poor Imams and so on, and so forth. After all, its not against the law to pray (unless of course you are a Christian in school, in court, or any other government building).

I think we have a great solution the next time something like this happens. Read carefully.

To those who are spiritually handicapped, facing a spiritually resolute individual, specially if he is empowered by a dark spirit, is a frightening thing. Our enemies today have an evil spiritual clarity. You cannot defeat this with magnetometers, airline security, brigades of TSA, or any law of man. You can only defeat it with a fierce spiritual clarity of your own.

The spiritual clarity we need is that we serve the One and Only God, that He is an awesome God, and that all things are under His command. And most importantly, that the gift given to us by His Son is real, and that being free of this body is to be instantly in His presence.

So if we die, or are killed, we will instantly be with Him. That is an awesome and powerful thing.

Safe in that knowledge, when faced with an individual like the would-be terrorizers on the airplane, seeking to terrorize others emotionally (if they get physical, so will we - with terminal results for them), we know that it is no coincidence that we stand there facing him.

God has appointed us to that battle. We must be ready for it whether it is a spiritual

battle, or a physical battle. Here is a prayer for that battle (said silently or aloud, as the situation may require).

Blessed be the Lord God of Hosts
The One and ONLY God - The Living God
The God of my ancestors
Who is Father, and Son and Holy Spirit
The God of Abraham, and Joshua, and David
Who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle.

Lord, you are a warrior - Your voice is like thunder, your eyes are like fire.
Grant me strength that I may give my account in battle.
Give me speed that I may hasten to meet my enemies.
Give me endurance Lord, that none may escape me.
Empower me Lord, to utterly destroy this dark and evil foe.

You know the number of my days Lord, and if I am to fall in this battle -
Grant that it be in a way to bring honor to you.
Grant that it be in a way to be an example for my brothers.
And grant that it be in a way,
To bring the most harm, pain, and destruction possible upon the enemy.

And Lord, I ask one final thing - that in your infinite mercy
You provide for and protect those that I leave behind.
For your Son and my Savior, The Warrior King.

In Jesus' name.

AMEN