

引言 INTRODUCTION

After living in this country for more than half of my life, I have become quite Americanized. One indication is that I love to watch team sports. I often joked with American friends that I went to the wrong school to study. I became addicted to college football. Despite my love for the sport, I could never imagine that my older son actually played it. He did not even watch the games on TV with me while growing up. But somehow he fell in love with it. He started playing since sixth grade. People were very serious at the competitions. Coaches were yelling, cheerleaders were chanting and the crowd was roaring. It was quite a scene. We live in the south. Many people worship football as an idol. Some parents warned me how dangerous playing football could be. Severe injuries are common. By God's grace, my son only suffered some bruises and scratches all these years. Now he is in college and he no longer plays in the school team. He knows that there is no way he can compete with young men who are a head taller and 100 pounds heavier than him. Every fall, our conversation naturally switches to football. We compare whether his school or my alma mater is better. Without a doubt, we want our team to win. Someone said: winning is not everything, it is the only thing! Like sports, like life. We live in a competitive world. We want our kids to excel in their studies and extra-curricular activities. We aspire to climb up the career ladder. Besides all those races, Paul tells us in today's passage that Christians are in a spiritual warfare. We are in a constant struggle until we see God in glory. There will only be winners and losers. We can have victory only when we rely on the Lord.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 爭戰的徵召 Enrollment in the Battle

Let us consider a few things from this passage. First, it is our enrollment in the battle. Once we become Christians we are enrolled in the battle automatically. Paul describes the transition we went through from non-believers to believers in Colossians 1:13 – **He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.** Those who are in Christ belong to the Heavenly Kingdom. Outsiders become insiders and alienated people are reconciled with God. Satan sees you as an opponent whether you like it or not and whether you feel it or not. He will launch constant attacks on you. There are a few things we need to be aware of if we want to win. First, we need to know our enemies. Paul tells us in verse 12: **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** Our enemies are spiritual in nature. Paul uses four terms to describe them: rulers, authorities, powers and forces. They may be leaders who have political and military power. They derive power from Satan ultimately. According to the Bible, Satan was an archangel created by God. He was jealous of God and he wanted to become equal with God. Therefore, he led some angels to rebel against God. This is not a Sci-Fi movie. You can refer to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 if you want to know more. The only goal of this troop is to lead people away from God. But the great news is, Satan is no match to God. Satan is a created being. He was defeated when Jesus Christ died on the cross. When Jesus returns in the future, He will completely eradicate Satan, his followers and the

problems of sin. After we know the nature of our enemies, we consider how to prepare for this war. Paul says in verse 10: **Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.** We must rely on God's strength to resist the devil's attack. We will stumble any time if we depend on ourselves. What are some tactics Satan uses today? One effective weapon is **complacency**. Some believers think that they have received a ticket to heaven. Let the zealous Christians read the Bible, attend church meetings, serve in the church and preach the gospel. They raise a white flag even before going to war. Then there is **competition**. Many believers want to climb to the top in their careers and they want their kids to beat others in school. Success becomes the only target in life. God puts us in the world to glorify Him. Good performance in school or at work should be a way to witness for God. Another crafty trick Satan uses is **confusion**. He tells people that there is no absolute truth. We have no right to judge others for doing bad things. Moreover, Satan fools people into believing that he does not exist. It is even okay to make fun of him. Even some Christians celebrate Halloween! Parents: there are other ways for kids to have a good time and to grab candies. We must know what is true before we can identify what is false. The Bible is a timeless standard for our daily life. Read it, memorize it and apply it, and we can stand firm. Then we can see the world from God's perspective. Why are there so much hatred and chaos in our society? Why do people who uphold tolerance cannot tolerate views that contrary to their standpoints? When people do not submit to God's truth, they must come up with a worldview that is anti-God. They say that humans are merely results of a biological process. Value of lives depends on people's contribution to the society. They think that this world is all that matters. They encourage people to collect treasure and indulge in pleasure as much as they can. We can evaluate things with a clear mind when we have a Biblical worldview.

2. 爭戰的裝備 Equipment for the Battle

After Paul talks about our enrollment in the battle, he then introduces our equipment for the battle. He calls it the full armor of God. Paul uses the uniform of a Roman warrior as an illustration. First, there is the "**belt of truth**." It is probably a leather apron worn under the body armor. Fastening this piece of clothing indicates readiness for battle. Christians must wrap themselves in God's truth. It helps us distinguish falsehood in the world. Next there is the "**breastplate of righteousness**." It is a sheet of metal protecting a soldier's heart. Symbolically, the heart represents our character. We need to shield our hearts with God's righteousness. Then we can fend off Satan's attacks such as temptations, slanders and false accusations. The third element of the armor are **shoes**. Soldiers need suitable footwear for long march. Paul describes them as "the readiness given by the gospel of peace." The picture may be borrowed from Isaiah 52:7 – **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."** It depicts a messenger traveling around to broadcast the good news of victory. God sends out believers to proclaim Jesus' triumph on the cross. The next element is the "**shield of faith**." It is a large screen that protects the whole body. In the ancient time, soldiers would soak their shields with water to quench the flaming arrows from enemies. The devil keeps shooting missiles of difficulties, health issues and doubts to weaken us. We need to constantly go back to the root of our faith. Jesus had saved us. He promised to never leave us nor forsake us. Those truths can protect us from Satan's weapons. Besides the shield of faith there is a "**helmet of salvation**." Other than the heart, the brain is another vital organ. The helmet worn by Roman soldiers were made of bronze. Christians have been saved from eternal condemnation. There is

nothing in this life that can scare us. In Romans 8, Paul lists a lot of hardships we may go through such as persecution, famine and even death. Then he concludes by saying “**(nothing) will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” (verse 39) We are secure in the everlasting love of God. All five accessories we mentioned above are defensive gears. As important as they are, soldiers cannot win a war by protecting themselves. They must attack their enemies. Paul brings up “**the sword of the Spirit**” as the final piece of equipment. It refers to the Word of God. The Bible is powerful because it is the inspired and unchanging truth of God. It is applicable to any person, at any time and under any situation. Jesus responded with the Word of God when He was tempted by Satan. He quoted the Bible three times by saying “it is written.” Similarly, we must refer to the Bible when we have doubts. Truths, rather than experts’ advice or our feelings, are the final authority. Satan’s attack can come at any moment and from different angles. We must put on the full armor of God before we leave home every morning. Some of you wear a uniform to work. People can tell what you do based on those clothes. Similarly, our spiritual armor shows people our identity. The question is: do people notice your armor? Can they see God’s truth and righteousness in your attitudes and actions? Do you leave footprints of God’s peace wherever you go? Is your faith strong enough to endure under pressure? Do you feel secure in your relationship with the Lord? Do you follow God’s truth, popular trends or personal preferences when making decisions? We must stay alert to Satan’s attack. We go to a spiritual warfare with spiritual gears.

3. 爭戰的參與 Engagement in the Battle

Christians are enrolled in a spiritual warfare the time they received Jesus. God gives us the proper equipment to fight. How do we actually engage ourselves in the battle? Paul tells us that prayer is the key. He says in verse 18: **Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.** There are four “all” here. Christians must pray at all times (or on all occasions), with all forms of prayer, pray with all perseverance (meaning to pray unceasingly) and pray for all the believers. Prayer is like the fuel that propels spiritual weapons. We often pray when we are weak in faith or when we have fear. Moses cried out to God when the Egyptian army were chasing after the Israelites. They were at the shore of the Red Sea and there was nowhere to go. God intervened and divided the water. The Israelites thus walked across the dry land but the Egyptians were drowned. Moses was confronting a powerful nation. He must completely rely on God. Once I know a Christian young man who traveled to his home country for a school break. His parents told him that they would go to the cemetery and pay tribute to some ancestors. He was required to burn incense and paper money. He knew he should not participate in the ritual, but he did not want to upset his family either. My wife and I prayed with him and we encouraged him to pray to God for wisdom. He was scared. When the family went to the graveside, they saw a sign posted by the local officials. There was a severe drought. Therefore, no one was not allowed to burn anything, lest it might start a forest fire. God relieved this brother from a challenging situation. Prayer is vital when we witness our faith before non-believers. When Paul reminded Christians to pray, he also included himself in the equation. He says in verse 19-20: **19 And also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.** At that time, Paul was locked up in a prison in Rome for the sake of the gospel. He did not feel despair. In fact, he took it as an opportunity to continue his gospel mission. His goal was to

testify before the Caesar. Paul asked the Ephesian church members to pray for him so that he could witness confidently, clearly and faithfully. It is easy for us to stay silent and even compromise our faith. But by God's grace, we can make a stand. Jesus encourages us in Matthew 10:19-20 – **19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.** Jesus gave instructions to His disciples as He sent them to preach the gospel. The Lord told them to prepare for persecution. Officials would take them to courts. But Jesus assured them that the Holy Spirit would give them the courage to say the right words. Just like Jesus' disciples and Paul did, many Christians suffer to this day. Lawsuits against Christians business owners and pro-life groups are not rare. We may not need to testify in a court. But we must be prepared to tell people what we believe. It may happen at a job interview or a casual chat with friends or coworkers. People may question where you stand on certain current issues. A colleague may ask how you spend your weekend. Your boss may request you to do something that is clearly against the Bible. How will you react? What is at stake is not only people's acceptance of you, but God's glory. Will you be a faithful Christian or a fearful chicken? Do not count on your wit. You must rely on God's wisdom. Pray for courage to stand strong and pray for a firm but respectful answer. People may defriend or hate you. Your boss may fire you. But God will be pleased when you stay loyal to Him.

結論 CONCLUSION

We can have victory in the spiritual warfare only when we rely on the Lord. While many people think that the world is a playground, Paul tells us that it is a battleground. All the Christians are enrolled in this spiritual battle. There is no reserve and there is no retired veteran. We do not go to the war unprepared, because God has given us the best spiritual equipment. We are never alone as we engage in this battle. We encourage one another and we are connected to God through prayer. God is looking down on us and He will guide us through the Holy Spirit living in us. We have limited vision. But God sees the whole picture. He is like an assistant football coach sitting high up in a skybox. He has a much better vantage point to analyze the game. He can communicate through a headset to other coaches on the ground. All that information can help the team win. We need to call time-out when we are struggling in our spiritual warfare. We need to gather fellow Christians and pray together. We look up to our best coach in heaven for direction. With God's help we can be victors and not victims in the fight.

引言 INTRODUCTION

在這個國家生活了大半輩子之後，我已經變得相當美國化了。一個跡像是我喜歡看打球。我常常和美國朋友開玩笑說我上錯學校，以致我對大學美式足球上癮。雖然我喜歡看比賽，但我無法想像我的大兒子竟然參加了這項運動。在成長過程中，他根本沒有和我一起看電視上的比賽。但不知為何，他愛上了這個活動。他從六年級開始打球。有些人對於比賽非常認真。教練在呼叫，啦啦隊喊口號，觀眾在歡呼。大家都全情投入。我們住在南部。很多人把足球當作偶像來崇拜。有些家長警告我打足球有多危險，嚴重受傷很常見。感謝神的恩典，這些年來我兒子只有一些輕微的受傷。現在他已經上大學，不再在校隊打球了。他知道自己不可能與比他高一頭、比他重一百磅的年輕人競爭。每年秋天，我們的話題自然會轉向足球。我們比較他的學校還是我的母校更利害。毫無疑問，我們希望自己的球隊獲勝。有人說：勝利不能代表一切，勝利是唯一最重要的事！生命就像運動競賽。我們生活在一個競爭激烈的世界。我們希望孩子在學習和課外活動中表現出色。我們渴望在事業中繼續向上爬。保羅在今天的經文中也告訴我們，基督徒正處於一場屬靈的爭戰中。我們會不斷地掙扎，直到我們在榮耀中看見神。戰事中只會有勝利和打敗。我們唯有依靠主才能得勝。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 爭戰的徵召 Enrollment in the Battle

讓我們從這段經文思考幾件事情。首先是爭戰的徵召。一旦我們成為基督徒，我們便自動加入這場戰爭。保羅在歌羅西書 1:13 節中描述我們信主前後的改變：**他救了我們脫離黑暗的權勢，把我們遷到他愛子的國裡。**所有在基督裡的人屬於天國。他們從局外人變成局內人，遠離神的人也與神和好。無論你喜歡與否，無論你是否感覺到，撒但都將你視為敵人。他會不斷地對你發動攻擊。如果我們想得勝，我們需要注意一些事情。首先，我們要了解我們的敵人。保羅在第 12 節告訴我們：**因我們並不是與屬血氣的爭戰，乃是與那些執政的、掌權的、管轄這幽暗世界的，以及天空屬靈氣的惡魔爭戰。**我們的敵人是屬靈的。保羅用四個字來形容他們：執政的、掌權的、管轄和惡魔 (或翻譯為邪惡勢力)。他們可能是擁有政治或軍事權力的元首。但最終他們是從撒但那裡獲得能力。根據聖經，撒但是神創造的天使長。他嫉妒神，想要與神平等。因

此，他帶領一些天使背叛神。那不是科幻電影。如果你想了解更多，可以參考以賽亞書 14 章和以西結書 28 章。這支隊伍的唯一目的就是帶領人遠離神。但好消息是，撒但不是神的對手。撒但是受造之物。當耶穌基督死在十字架上時，祂打敗了撒但的權柄。當耶穌再來時，祂將徹底剷除撒但、他的跟隨者和罪的問題。當我們了解到敵人的本質之後，我們思考如何為這場戰爭做好準備。保羅在第 10 節說：**我還有末了的話：你們要靠著主，倚賴他的大能大力作剛強的人。**我們必須依靠神的能力來抵擋魔鬼的攻擊。如果我們靠自己，隨時都會跌倒。撒但今天會使用哪些策略？其中一樣有效的武器是**安逸**。有些信徒認為他們已經拿到天堂的門票。就讓那些熱心的基督徒讀聖經、參加教會聚會、在教會服事和傳福音吧！他們在還沒有打仗之前就舉白旗。撒但另外一招是**競爭**。許多信徒渴望爬到事業的頂峰，他們也希望自己的孩子在學校名列前茅。成功是他們人生的唯一目標。神把我們放在世上是為了榮耀祂。在學校或工作上的優秀表現應該是為神作見證的途徑。撒但運用的另一個狡猾的伎倆是**混淆**。他告訴人們，沒有絕對的真理。我們沒有權利去批評別人做的壞事。此外，撒但愚弄人們，讓他們以為他不存在。於是拿魔鬼來開玩笑也無所謂。因此，連很多基督徒都慶祝萬聖節。家長們：還有其他方式讓你的孩子玩得開心並拿到糖果。我們必須先知道什麼是真的，然後才能分辨什麼是假的。聖經是我們日常生活永恆不變的標準。我們要讀聖經、記記並應用真理，才能站穩腳步。然後我們就能從神的角度看世界。為什麼社會上有那麼多仇恨和混亂？為何一些主張寬容的人不能容忍與自己立場相反的觀點？當人不順服神的真理時，他們必然會跟隨違反神的世界觀。他們說人只是生理過程的結果。生命的價值取決於人對社會的貢獻。他們認為今生才是最重要的。他們鼓勵人們拼命賺錢然後盡情享樂。當我們保持聖經的世界觀時，我們就能以清晰的頭腦來評估事物。

2. 爭戰的裝備 Equipment for the Battle

保羅講完了爭戰的徵召後，他接著介紹我們爭戰的裝備。他稱之為神的全副屬靈軍裝。保羅借用了羅馬戰士的製服。首先，有「真理的腰帶」。它可能是穿在盔甲下面用皮做成的圍裙。綁緊這件衣服表示軍人準備好作戰。基督徒必須將自己包裹在神的真理中。它幫助我們辨別世上的謊言。接下來是「公義的護心鏡」。它是保護士兵心臟的金屬片。心象徵一個人的品格。我們需要用神的公義來保護我們的心。這樣我們就能抵擋撒但的試探、毀謗、誣告。軍裝的第三部份是鞋子。士兵們需要穿適合鞋子作長征。保羅將它們描述為「平安的福音當作預備走路的鞋」。那幅圖畫可能是從以賽亞書 52:7 借用：**那報佳音，傳平安，報好信，傳救恩的，對錫安說：你的神作王了！這人的腳登山何等佳美！**它描繪一位使者四處奔走，傳播勝利的好消息。神差遣信徒去宣告耶穌在十

字架上得勝的佳音。下一個配件是「信德的藤牌」。那是一塊保護全身的大盾牌。在古代，士兵們會把盾牌浸濕來熄滅敵人的火箭。魔鬼不斷以困難、健康問題或憂慮等飛箭來削弱我們的信心。我們需要不斷地回到信仰的根基。耶穌拯救了我們。祂應許永遠不會撇下我們，也不會丟棄我們。這些真理可以保護我們免受撒但的攻擊。除了信德的藤牌之外，還有「救恩的頭盔」。除了心臟之外，腦部是另一個重要的器官。羅馬士兵佩戴的頭盔是銅製成的。神救我們脫離永恆的定罪。今生沒有任何事物可以讓我們害怕。在羅馬書第 8 章中，保羅列出了許多我們可能經歷的困難，例如迫害、飢餓，甚至死亡。然後他總結道：**（任何事情）都不能叫我們與神的愛隔絕；這愛是在我們的主基督耶穌裡的。**（第 39 節）我們在神永恆的愛中是安全的。我們上面提到的五個配件都是用作防衛的。雖然那些裝備都很重要，但士兵無法單靠保護自己來贏得戰爭。他們必須攻擊敵人。保羅提出「聖靈的寶劍」作為最後一樣配件。它指的是神的道。聖經是帶有能力的，因為它是神所默示的、不變的真理。它適用於任何人、任何時間、任何情況。當耶穌受撒但試探時，祂用神的話來回應。祂三次引用聖經說：「經上記著說」。同樣，當我們有疑問時，也必須回到聖經。真理才是最終的權威，而不是專家的意見或我們的感覺。撒但可能隨時從不同的角度來攻擊我們。每天早上離開家之前，我們必須穿戴神所賜的全副軍裝。有些人穿著制服上班。人們可以根據這些衣服知道你做那一行。同樣，我們的屬靈軍裝告訴別人我們的身份。問題是：人們注意到你的軍裝嗎？他們能從你的態度和行為看到神的真理和公義嗎？無論走到哪裡，都會留下神平安的痕跡嗎？你的信心是否堅定，能夠承受壓力？你和主的關係是否穩固？你做決定時是依靠神的真理、流行趨勢還是個人喜好？我們必須警惕撒但的攻擊。我們穿著屬靈裝備去應付屬靈戰爭。

3. 爭戰的參與 Engagement in the Battle

基督徒一旦接受耶穌就被徵召進入一場屬靈爭戰。神給了我們適當的爭戰裝備。我們如何實際參與爭戰呢？保羅告訴我們，禱告是關鍵。他在第 18 節說：**靠著聖靈，隨時多方禱告祈求；並要在此警醒不倦，為眾聖徒祈求。**在希臘原文聖經這裡有四個「任何」。基督徒必須在任何場合禱告，以任何形式禱告，在任何時候禱告（意思是不住地禱告），並為任何信徒禱告。禱告就像推動屬靈武器的燃料。當我們信心軟弱或有恐懼時，我們常常會禱告。當埃及軍隊追趕以色列人時，摩西向神呼求。他們已經到了紅海邊緣，無路可走。神介入並分開海水。以色列人就這樣走過乾地，而埃及人卻被淹死了。摩西面對的是一個強大的國家。他必須完全依靠神。我曾經認識一位年輕基督徒，他在學校放假時回家探親。他的父母告訴他，他們要去墓園拜祭祖先。他要燒香和紙錢。他知道自己不應該參加那些儀式，但他也不想讓家人不高興。我和我的太太和

他一起禱告，我們也鼓勵他向神求智慧。他心裡很害怕。當家人前往墓地時，他們看到了官員張貼的牌子。當時有嚴重的乾旱。因此，人們不准燒任何東西，以免引起森林火災。神使這位弟兄擺脫了困境。當我們在非信徒面前見證我們的信仰時，禱告是至關重要的。當保羅提醒基督徒要禱告時，他也將自己也包括在內。他在 19 至 20 節說：19 也為我祈求，使我得著口才，能以放膽開口講明福音的奧秘，20（我為這福音的奧秘作了帶鎖鍊的使者，）並使我照著當盡的本分放膽講論。當時，保羅為了福音的緣故，被關在羅馬的監獄裡。他並沒有感到絕望。事實上，他利用這個機會繼續傳福音。他的目標是在凱撒大帝面前作見證。保羅請求以弗所教會的信徒為他禱告，使他能否勇敢地、清晰地並忠實地作見證。我們很容易保持沉默，甚至妥協我們的信仰。但靠著神的恩典，我們可以堅定地站穩。耶穌在馬太福音 10:19-20 中鼓勵我們：19「你們被交的時候，不要思慮怎樣說話，或說什麼話。到那時候，必賜給你們當說的話；20 因為不是你們自己說的，乃是你們父的靈在你們裡頭說的。」當耶穌差遣門徒去傳福音時，祂給了他們指示。祂告訴他們要為迫害做好準備。官員會將他們告上法庭。但耶穌向他們保證，聖靈會給他們勇氣說適合的話。就像耶穌的門徒和保羅一樣，許多基督徒至今仍然為信仰受苦。針對基督徒的生意和反墮胎團體的訴訟並非罕見。我們可能不需要在法庭上作證，但我們必須準備好告訴人們我們的信仰。可能是發生在工作面試或與朋友或同事的聊天中。人們可能會詢問你對於某些時事的立場。同事可能會問你如何渡過週末。老闆可能要求你做一些明顯違反聖經的事情。你會如何回應？這不只關係到人們是否接納你，也會影響到神的榮耀。你會成為一個忠實的基督徒還是一隻膽怯的小雞？不要憑著你的小聰明。你必須依靠神的智慧。祈求神給你勇氣堅定地站穩，以肯定的語氣並尊重的態度回答。人們可能會不喜歡你，甚至不跟你做朋友。你的老闆可能會解僱你。但當你對神忠心時，神會非常的喜悅。

結論 CONCLUSION

我們唯有依靠主才能在屬靈爭戰中得勝。許多人認為世界是個遊樂場，但保羅告訴我們，這是一個戰場。所有的基督徒都參與了這場屬靈的爭戰。沒有後備軍人，也沒有退役的老兵。我們不會毫無準備地去打仗，因為神給了我們最好的屬靈裝備。當我們參與這場戰鬥時，我們從來都不是孤軍作戰。我們透過禱告互相鼓勵，並與神連結在一起。神從天上觀察我們，並透過住在我們裡面的聖靈來引導我們。我們的視野有限，但是神看到整個局面。祂就像一位坐在包廂裡的助理教練，他有更好的角度來分析比賽。他可以透過耳機與地面上的其他教練溝通。所有這些信息都可以幫助球隊獲勝。當我們在屬靈爭戰中掙扎時，我們需要停下來。我們需要聚集信徒一起禱告。我們向天上的教練尋求指引。在神的幫助下，我們可以成為戰爭的勝利者而不是失敗者。