

“HOLY WAR”

“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. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”

Ephesians 6:12-13

“Holy War.” That phrase sounds so archaic, like something that took place centuries ago during the Crusades. As Americans, because we are made up of so many people from so many different lands and religions, we would never think of engaging in a holy war of any sort. But, whether we like it or not, we are in one.

Every day, we see news reports of radical Islamic groups worldwide whose goal is nothing short of bringing the entire planet under Sharia Law. Whether it’s ISIS/ISIL/IS – I wish our government and media would pick a name and stick with it – or Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, or any and all of the other groups and cells around the world, they all have one aim: World domination under Islam. To them, this war, or Jihad, is a holy endeavor carried out in the name of their god. And they are willing to kill everyone who refuses to convert. This is not alarmism, but fact.

Of course, people will argue that Islam and its followers are peaceful; that it’s only a radicalized few causing all the trouble. Well, let’s do the math: There are 1.6 *billion* Muslims worldwide. Even if only 10% of them are the violent radicals, that’s still *One hundred and sixty million* (more than half the population of the United States) committed to violence, conquest and the destruction of all who will not submit to Allah, especially Christians. So, if the peaceful majority of Muslims worldwide who just want to “live and let live” continue to remain silent to the abuses and evil of their radicalized brethren, then they, along with the rest of the non-Muslim world, are in extreme danger from these radical Jihadists.

As I said before: whether you like it or not, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, moderate Muslims, Secularists and even Atheists are involved in a Holy War for their survival. The Jihadists are bringing it to us. As the Hamas Charter says: “We love death more than the Infidels (that’s you and me) love life.”

Now, you can stick your head in the sand and deny that there is a real threat; you can wring your hands in anxious impotence until someone lops your head off; you can get angry and say stupid things like “*We oughta just nuke the entire Middle East back to the stone age,*” or you can respond prayerfully, soberly and with courage and resolve.

As American Christians (citizens of God’s “Left Hand Kingdom,” the State), we must support and, for some of us, engage in the use of arms and force to protect our country and its allies against those who would seek to control and conquer us. To be weak and irresolute in this matter allows the Jihadists to gain greater numbers, strength and power until they cannot be stopped. Sadly, for many of them, the only way to stop them is to kill them.

As Christians of every nation, tribe, people and language (citizens all of God’s “Right Hand Kingdom,” the Church), we do not advance the faith by worldly weapons of war, but by the weapons of the Spirit: God’s Word and Prayer. We do not “Kill our enemies for Christ,” but we pray that, by God’s mercy, they would be brought to repentance for their evil and to faith in the atoning death of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Matt. 5:44). We confess boldly “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2)” for all. We remain “faithful unto death” with the assurance that, again by God’s grace alone through Christ, “we will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).”

We also pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ worldwide who are facing severe persecution. We should support them in every possible way, in both their spiritual needs and in their physical needs, which

are many. Our Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has a link on its website (lcms.org) to give you opportunity to contribute to the needs of persecuted Christians worldwide.

And, in what may be surprising to many, if the Jihadists and other persecutors of God's people refuse to repent and stop carrying out their evil plans, we pray for God's curse upon them; that He would thwart them or destroy them, as He sees fit ("Rouse Yourself to punish the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil." Ps. 59:5). We do not seek personal vengeance, but we leave vengeance upon the enemies of the Gospel to God, while entrusting ourselves to Him for whatever the outcome will be. It has been true throughout history that during times of greatest persecution, the Gospel shines most brightly through it, and many are brought to faith in the Redeemer who gave His life for all.

Indeed, while the idea of a Holy War may be foreign to us, Christians have always been engaged in a Holy War against the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh. While the present time we live in may seem very uncertain, what is certain and sure is that Christ has conquered already; He is the Victor, and through Him who has loved us, we are also "more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37)."

For your comfort and encouragement, I close with the words from Hymn #666 (a little irony there, let the reader understand) in Lutheran Service Book:

1. O little flock, fear not the foe who madly seeks your overthrow;
Dread not his rage and pow'r.
And though your courage sometimes faints, his seeming triumph o'er
God's saints lasts but a little hour.
2. Be of good cheer; your cause belongs to Him who can avenge your
wrongs; Leave it to Him, our Lord. Though hidden yet from mortal
Eyes; His Gideon shall for you arise,
uphold you and His Word.
3. As true as God's own Word is true, not earth nor hell's satanic crew
against us shall prevail.
Their might? A joke, a mere façade! God is with us and we with God –
Our vict'ry cannot fail.
4. Amen, Lord Jesus, grant our prayer; Great Captain, now Thine arm make
bare, Fight for us once again!
So shall Thy saints and martyrs raise a mighty chorus
To Thy praise forevermore. Amen.

God bless, strengthen and uphold you in Christ.