

I. Introduction

- A. Any thinking person today would recognize that we live in an era of revolution.
- B. The old order is not only passing away, it is being systematically, and sometimes violently dismantled.
- C. All around, we see the revolution taking place.
  1. It is a moral revolution... where good is evil and evil is good and evil is celebrated and now force-fed into our culture.
  2. It is a truth revolution... where we are told we live in a post-truth era, which is a self-negating assertion.
  3. It is a reality revolution... where what we see with our own eyes and observe with our own senses — where what we know is real — things like boys are boys and girls are girls and God made us male and female — we are being told these things unreal and we are judged, and condemned, and cancelled for even daring to entertain a contrary thought.
  4. It is a spiritual revolution... where the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has been shoved aside not only by a virulent atheism, but also by hordes of spirits and emanations and experiences and goddesses — a spirit of religion which is Satan masquerading as an angel of light..
- D. One of the best descriptions of this revolution in which we're all stuck comes from Theo Hobson, a liberal British theologian: "That which was repudiated must be celebrated. That which was celebrated must be repudiated. And those who will not celebrate must themselves be repudiated."
- E. What was unthinkable to our grandparents — what was horrific to them — is not only considered normal today, but we are required to bow before these gilded deceptions, or risk, like Nebuchadnezzar's statue, being erased through a whole new kind of fiery furnace. What was unthinkable to our grandparents is called a sacrament today.
- F. Which only makes me worry that what is unthinkable today will be the new rule of tomorrow, if we continue on this revolutionary trajectory. But God is on his throne. He is not worried. His providence is not broken. God who sits in the heavens laughs at these power-brokers of earth who set themselves above his divine law. A rude awakening is on its way for each and every one.
- G. Standing against this humanistic attempt to throw off truth and morality is the inviolable Word of God and the rock solid Church that takes its stand unashamedly and unapologetically on that Word.

II. Faith Wins

- A. Today is part six in a series. We are in super-low gear, grinding through every inch of pavement in this book of the Bible called Second Peter.
- B. This book was written by Peter. It was written in an age a lot like this one. The social order was in turmoil. The religious order was under attack. And the old serpent, the devil, was busy trying to undermine the truths of God's Word with false teachers who were popular, cool, hip, good looking, wise sounding incarnations of the spawn of Satan.
- C. There are lots of them still around today.
- D. So Peter writes this book to re-center the church on the truth and gospel of God.
- E. Today, we are in chapter one, verse 5. *"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (2 Peter 1:5-8)
  1. Will you please think with me today on the topic: It takes a certain kind of Christian to stand against the encroaching darkness, and in four short verses, Peter describes that Christian. My hope and prayer is that it describes us... and that we are all dedicated to becoming that certain kind of Christian.
  2. Peter says *add to your faith*. Don't stop with just being saved. Add to your faith.
  3. When he writes the word "add" it's a word that means to outfit an expedition. I means to provide all the gear needed for a theatrical production. It means to provide all the weaponry and shields for a military outfit. God has given you this armor, put it on.
  4. Plus he says, "giving all diligence..." which simply means to light a fire and hurry up. That is God's message to the church today.
  5. Why does the world laugh at the church?
  6. Because we are too emotional, too experiential, too immature, too illiterate in the Word of God, too human centered, too practical, too much lovers of selves, too much lovers of pleasure, too shallow, too carnal, too ignorant, and too clueless of the deep things of God.
  7. We contradict our own teachings.
  8. When you skip your spiritual growth, and when you skip a constant walk with God, you fail to replenish your armor, and you open up dangerous gaps.

9. And that's the Christian Peter describes in verses 8 and 9: Barren, unfruitful in the knowledge of God, short sided, blind, and forgetful of your own salvation. And then there's one more negative consequence you'll really be kicking yourself over... but we'll save that for next time.
10. God loves you, and you are saved, and he will take care of you, and you are going to heaven, but you are worthless to the cause of the gospel on planet earth. So God sent you here today to hear me say, Stop it.
11. Be eager to add to your faith... God won't do this for you. Prayer won't do this for you. An experience of God's presence won't do this for you. It has to be your ongoing choice, your own due diligence. And now we are ready for the seven plates of invincible armor: add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity

**F. The Christian In Complete Armor**

1. **Virtue | The Heart of a Warrior**
  - a) The older idea of this word is manliness. The deeper idea is the heart of a warrior.
  - b) This world bent out of shape from God's will. We live on a battlefield.
  - c) It is high time for Christians to realize that we are not a company of poor little bunnies, meant to be comforted and soothed and pacified all the way to heaven.
  - d) We are God's army on earth. We are warriors. All shapes, all sizes, all temperaments.
  - e) The world is testing you. The devil is tempting you. And God is looking on to see what you're made of.
  - f) Do you panic? Do you flip out? Do you lose your testimony when things go bad? We're in a battle, and to the world, Christians are the bad guys. The fight you are in isn't a battle to get what's coming to you. It isn't a fight to build the kingdom of God on earth. The fight you are in is a fight to proclaim the gospel, to live the gospel, and to see men and women and boys and girls be saved because of your testimony. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age [the devil] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4) There's the battle right there... so... Add to your faith the heart of a warrior. Grow to maturity, and let the world see the victorious, triumphant Savior through you.
2. **Knowledge | The Wisdom of a Sage**
  - a) This is a constant emphasis of Peter and of all the writers of Scripture.
  - b) Knowledge matters. Truth matters. Doctrine and theology matter. If your Bible is gathering dust, I don't care who you are, you are leaving gaping holes in your spiritual armor. If the teaching and the preaching of the Word of God is optional for you, or occasional for you, or unimportant to you, then you are leaving gaping holes in your spiritual armor.
  - c) Knowledge of God's Word matters because knowing God is everything and to know him is to love him.
  - d) And you can't know God apart from the Scriptures. This is where God shows up, right here in the pages of an open Bible.
  - e) The battle of the ages is a battle for your mind.
  - f) The the invincible weapon of your warfare is Bible study. Daily, regular, ongoing teaching and study of the precious Word of God for spiritual maturity along the Grace pathway.
  - g) Add to your faith the heart of a warrior and, to the heart of a warrior, the wisdom of a sage.
3. **Self Control | Dominion Over Your Passions & Impulses**
  - a) Ask yourself a not-so-simple question. Who's running your life? Really, who's running your life?
  - b) It's not so simple because a lot of us would just say, Well I am. I'm running my life.
  - c) But think about it.
  - d) If a lot of us were really honest, our answer would be different. My mountain of debt is running my life. I think about it every day. My addiction is running my life. My whole family is affected. My anger is running my life. I'm bitter. I'm angry. I want revenge. My fear is running my life. It's paralyzing my progress and wrecking my relationships. My dead dad/absentee father is running my life. I'll show him how wrong he was about me. My laziness is running my life. I don't want to work hard, and I want to be taken care of.
  - e) Who is really running your life? What force dominates your day to day existence?
  - f) The Bible teaches and experience proves that there is a dark side to every soul. The Bible gives it the name. Your dark side is called the Flesh: *"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."* (Galatians 5:19-21)

- g) When the flesh runs your life, your self-control evaporates into a misty haze. This is the opposite of self-control. *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”* (2 Timothy 3:1-4)
  - h) The best description of social media ever written. The opposite of being dominated by your flesh is being led by your spirit; your human spirit under the influence of the Holy Spirit. I say then: *“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”*. (Galatians 5:16) God set your noble self on the throne of your life. You, under the influence of the Spirit and the Leadership of Christ. That is self-control. That is your truest, most noble self, calling the shots. God calls it dominion. That is holiness, and victory, and sanctification, and a great testimony for the name of Jesus Christ, all rolled into one. There are too many flesh-dominated Christians, don’t you think?
  - i) So Peter says, add to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, and to your knowledge self-control... which is dominion over your passions and impulses.
4. Perseverance | Dominion Over Your Circumstances
- a) Just as self-control is dominion over your passions and impulses, perseverance is dominion over your circumstances.
  - b) We are members of a fallen race, and we live in a fallen world. Bad things happen. Pain, loss, pandemic, unfair treatment, randomness, sickness... you name it.
  - c) One of the biggest tests of your spiritual maturity is how a person responds to adversity. There is a grief that is natural and God-given. But then there is a bitterness, and self-blame, and lashing out, and hardening of the heart that is not from God.
  - d) Perseverance is you showing dominion over your circumstances. You are not ruled by hardships, but by the strength and integrity of your own heart in relationship to God. *“Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled many weary miles. I have faced danger from flooded rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the stormy seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be Christians but are not. I have lived with weariness and pain and sleepless nights. Often I have been hungry and thirsty and have gone without food. Often I have shivered with cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.... Since I know it is all for Christ’s good, I am quite content with my weaknesses and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”* (2 Corinthians 11:25-27; 12:10, NLT).
  - e) This is perseverance. It is staying power. It is the willingness to keep faith with God — to get knocked down again and again, but pick yourself up again and again. It is not reacting to trials in a way that damages the cause of Christ. It is refusing make excuses for giving in to temptation. Perseverance is your steady-state display of...maturity instead of immaturity, spirituality instead of carnality, sanctification instead of self-absorption.
  - f) Peter is pleading with the people of God to grow mature. To live not their best life now, but their most noble, God-centered life now, and leave the outcomes to him.
  - g) Are you willing to be that person? Are you willing to be the Christian in Complete Armor? Add to your faith the heart of a warrior, the wisdom of a sage, dominion over your passions and impulses, dominion over your circumstances, and then...
5. Godliness | A Heart Devoted to God
- a) The word translated godliness is really hard to translate into English.
  - b) Here’s the best I can come up with.
  - c) Godliness means loving God more than you love your rights. More than you love your opinions. More than you love your your wounds. More than you love being offended or playing the victim.
  - d) John writes: *“We love Him because He first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19)
  - e) Godliness is the overflow of grace in a life that results in the life of Christ, the character of Christ, the courage of Christ, and the love of Christ being expressed through the life of a Christian.
  - f) Do you call yourself a Christian?
  - g) Live up to that name. Live up to that name in good times and in bad times. Live up to that name no matter how you feel. Live up to that name in attitude, opinions, emotions, voting, and social media posts. Live up to the name of Christian. Add to your perseverance godliness.
  - h) Godliness is love for God on display, 24/7 without excuse.
  - i) But there’s a warning label on this one: Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)
  - j) Now, are you willing to be that person?

## 6. Brotherly Kindness | The Kindness of a Friend

- a) Christianity brought together people who normally didn't belong together. Rich and poor. Slave and Free. Male and female. Young and old. They became friends. This is the ideal of the church. And this is the spirit of Jesus. He saw people, and said, Hey, let's have dinner. At your place. This is hospitality, affection, friendliness, kindness, and goodness. It is part of spiritual maturity. It is the opposite of crabbiness. Grumpiness. Complaining. Whining. Demanding your rights. Brotherly love is the warm smile, the warm handshake, and the warm embrace. A good neighbor. A helping hand. A cheerful smile. It was this affectionate relationship in the early Church among Christian converts, in spite of their diverse status and varied backgrounds, that amazed the pagans. And it is part part of a Christian's armor... because the devil loves crabby Christians. One more. Add to your brotherly kindness... charity.

## 7. Charity | Nobility of Soul

- a) This is the famous Greek word *agape*. It used to be translated *charity*, but then it was translated *love*. But now our culture has so many warped ideas of what love is, that I'd like to go back to charity. At least it makes a person think. You might have heard that *agape* is unconditional love. Not exactly. You might have heard that *agape* is God's love. Not exactly. What is it? Take the simple sentence: I love you. There's a subject (I) and an object (you). When you love a person because of the qualities in the object, in the other person, we'll call that Attraction love. I love you because you are handsome, cute, pretty, rich, funny, conservative, your teeth are straight, sexy, attractive. Attraction love is great. It's the basis of romance, friendship, marriage, and a lot of other things. But it is unstable. What happens when the beauty fades, the money goes away, or the teeth fall out? Let's go back to the statement, I love you. When you love a person because of qualities in the subject (I), we'll call that Virtue Love. I love you because I have the resources in my heart and soul to love you. I have the integrity. I have the character. I have the maturity. I have what it takes to do the loving act and to say the loving word, even when you wear me out. I have developed the inner maturity to give of myself without losing myself. To sacrifice without becoming a martyr. To serve without becoming a victim. That is agape love. It is love from my own character, independent of the other person's worthiness. Agape love is Calvary love. Jesus showed it to the max. There was nothing in us that made him love us. God loves us because of who and what he is, not because of who and what we are. This is agape love. Obviously we can say a lot more about this, but we'll save it.

## III. Conclusion

- A. I'd like to wrap it with an old hymn I sang as a kid growing up in church. It is one of Charles Wesleys' best hymns, from back in the 1700s. The theme is spiritual warfare, and the title is Soldiers of Christ, Arise, and the tune is Crown Him With Many Crowns.
- B. Soldiers of Christ, Arise!
1. *Soldiers of Christ, arise,  
And put your armor on,  
Strong in the strength which God supplies  
Through His eternal Son.  
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,  
And in His mighty power,  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.*
  2. *Leave no unguarded place,  
No weakness of the soul,  
Take every virtue, every grace,  
And fortify the whole;  
From strength to strength go on,  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray,  
Tread all the powers of darkness down,  
And win the well-fought day.*
- C. Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul.
- D. You can lock all the doors of your house, except one, and the thieves will walk in and steal.
- E. And you can ignore even one of these armor plates, and the devil's lies will break and steal your joy, deface your testimony, and violate your identity.
- F. The Church in Complete Armor is God's force on earth to stand against the darkness.
- G. If you call yourself a Christian, be a godly Christian, fully armed and ready for the fight. Because a mature and grace-powered Church is the world's only hope.