

Last month we talked about the rising tensions in our nation. The political and economic tensions in particular. And yet, for the pastor who is paying attention, it is clear that there are great tensions in the American Evangelical Church as well. There seems to be a constant stream of leaders abandoning the faith, or at least any resemblance of true Biblical teaching. There are strong, theologically liberal movements, challenging nearly every Evangelical denomination. We've seen how we should approach the practical tensions of our time, but how do we approach the spiritual ones?

This fall in our church, we did a study on the book of Judges in adult Sunday School class. I was reminded as we were going through it of a few verses that have really stuck out to me in the past. Judges 3:1-2, 4 reads, ¹*Now these are the nations that the Lord left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan.* ²*It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before...* ⁴*They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.*" (Judges 3:1-2, 4)

If one stops for 5 minutes to meditate on what that passage is saying, you will realize it packs quite a punch. God left enemies in Israel, so that they might know *war*, so that they might be *tested*, so that the Lord would know whether they would *obey* His commandments.

Now if the Lord left enemies for the nation of Israel to fight, so that they might be tested and know war, why should we think the Lord would not do the same for us? A quick survey of church history will reveal that the battle for truth has never really simmered down. The battle for truth has been fought by every generation.

Ephesians 6 teaches us that the battle we fight in the church is not one against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers. Then Paul goes on to list our weapons of war. Paul seems to think that there is actually a battle that is going to need to be fought, and not just by the Ephesians, but by all believers.



We serve a Sovereign God, and if there are enemies in the world, and enemies in the church, it is no coincidence. Nor should we expect to not have to fight the battles of our forefathers in the faith. It is the battle that reveals our hearts. It is the battle that shows what we are made of. It is the battle that refines and sharpens our faith. The challenges that arise before us in the church should be of no surprise, we are still awaiting

the return of the King, and the battle rages on. Every generation of God's people must know war, every generation must be tested, every generation proved. Fight well for the glory of your King, and leave the rest in His hands.

Sincerely,

A Podunk Pastor

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