

The Sword of the Spirit: 1990

By Clyde Cook

If you made your own lunch today and it's super

Or you've been married less than a year and your spouse made a great lunch. Don't sit next to Dr. Rigsbee over there in the cafeteria. He's liable to talk you out of your lunch and give you his.

How's your spiritual life this morning? Do you feel victorious? I sit here in chapels I you know I just feel like boy I'm never going to sin again. Just the music. Donna you are you're playing Bach there this morning. This just so inspiring and just just incredible the way you feel. And then you walk out of here and just you and the Lord and wherever you go maybe to class or maybe it's to the library. Maybe it's in my case back at the office and I see the folder of letters there and hope that Gloria Foster has put the worst one on the bottom to kind of get into it a little bit.

And then I lose my spirituality and you know I just.

The inconsistency that I see in my own life and in the lives of a lot of people that I I talk with.

And yet God doesn't want to have up's and down's you know peaks and valleys. He's given us the

resources to have complete and consistent victory. And you heard about him this morning as we read the passage in Ephesians 6. So I want it to not take the whole armor of God this morning but just one piece of the armor. Where Paul says take the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

Now when Anabelle and I were missionaries in the Philippines one of the big well not big, but probably the most popular tourist souvenir that came back from the Philippines was a shield. You get a little shield like this or rather large shield and on each shield had about 17 different swords. I guess swords are very important in the Philippines in their history and they had each sword had a different name and they had different function and a different shape. And they got little replicas of all these swords there and there you know some are really long there that you might want to you could actually cut your toenails without bending over. You could stand there

right there. Because they're really long and there are others you know for cutting down sugar cane and other for husking coconuts and others for taking off people's heads or stabbing them and so forth. There are lots of different stories because your culture determines the language. Now you know how many words for sword do we need? We have just one word sword. Oh we might have dagger or something like that but basically sword, but in the Philippine culture you know lots of swords. Same thing in Paul's day when they had all these swords they had a lot of choices.

Eskimos they tell us have all kinds of words for snow. You know to me I don't like snow. I just like to watch it on the mountains about three times a year and I can see the mountains there. But they have different kinds of words for snow. In Arabic they say there are hundreds of words for camels and parts of camels and equipment that goes on camels. So we don't have the uh... so the culture then will determine how many words you need just need a word you make it up. And so Paul had all kinds of choices when he came to this passage when he said take the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. For example and just to help you remember this because I remember spending a lot of time at night studying and going to class and coming to Chapel rather sleepily.

It's so easy to doze so I'm going to make it easy for you to remember this. He could have said take the rafiah of the spirit which is a word of God. Now the rafiah is a very large sword. 5 to 6 feet tall and I'm 6 feet 4. At least I put that down when they measured me for my body fat today. Between 6'3 and 6'4 but you know. Actually from my body weight you know I should be about 6'9 but. Let's say I'm 6'4. So this sword would come to about here.

If I had a rafiah this morning I stood here and I grabbed it had a big double handle here and I swung it around here why I'd take off three heads, one nose, two ears and give you a half a shave there that, that nice looking beard you had.

So it was a big you know heavy sword. You know quite effective. So Paul said I could take the Rafiah of the spirit which is the word of God or he could have said.

Use this word acinaces. This sword is used by the Persians. Now you know there's one famous Bible teacher who talked about these swords that says it was never used for fighting. Well the Oxford Classical Dictionary has a little sketch of one of these and in somebody's back, but for the most part

it wasn't used for fighting it was used for bestowing great worth like you know can famous can Professor here came to our village and we want to bestow worth on him well we give him a you know acinaces a great general, a king it was made out of gold often and these little things here represent rubies and diamonds and precious stones. So Paul could have said Take the acinaces of the spirit a very valuable sword and so the keys to the city is a terrific sword. Or Paul could have said, Take the dolon

of the spirit I actually have a dolon here. It's a small dolon but never the less it's a dolon and see it doesn't look like a sword. The dolon didn't look like a sword it look like a walking stick. But inside? Voila! You know a sword. You know those of you know Greek. The word Dolo is to deceive. Very deceptive. He's walking along here you know. Colonel Boogey. You know and so

I can imagine an elderly gentleman in Rome going home after work at night. He's walking along and all of a sudden around the corner

come for juvenile teenagers and most juveniles are teenagers right. So they're bouncing along in their chariot here you know. And the things not going fast enough and they say well you know we've got to stop and fill these things up with hay. Where's the hay station? And they said Well who's got any money you know how when you're carpooling or chariot-pooling you know

nobody has any money and well why didn't you borrow your father's credit card hey look he doesn't even have a chariot let alone the credit card man what are we going to do? Lo and behold there goes the elderly gentleman. You know he must be wealthy. Look at that tailor made toga on. And he's got why he's got Italian sandals.

Of course he's got Italian sandals. This is Rome man.

So we'll jump out of the chariot. We'll charge him over there. Give us your money. He says, Can I help you guys?

Oh we just, excuse me sir. We're just trying to find our way to the Colosseum. We heard the Christians are playing the lions there and said yeah go down there four blocks turn to your left there and there's a big building there kind of crumpled on one side and you and you see a bunch of tourists out there. So Paul could've said take the dolon of the spirit which is the word of God.

Or he could have use this word. Now there were other swords too I just chose four here. The makhaira. Now the makhaira was a short sword more like a dagger with both sides sharp and the point sharp and so Paul could've said Take the makhaira of the spirit. Well now you're a very intelligent crowd here and I as a professor I like to give tests. So I'm going to give you a little test this morning. You've got four choices. Multiple choice now. How many of you here think that when Paul had a choice, if you have your Greek Testament here you don't vote. You're disqualified.

How many here think that he said Take the rafiah of the spirit. This big effective one that could wipe out a lot of people at a time here. So let me see your hands. How many people think that took the...said Take the rafiah of the spirit which is the word of God. Don't look around. Let's find out who else is voting here.

You want to vote for rafiah that's great. There are two votes you might be right. Three. Okay four. That's enough. We've got to keep moving here.

How many think you said take the acinaces a very precious, valuable sword. Gold and silver and precious stones and so forth. How many you think, said that the acinaces. Let me see your hand. One there. Boy that's even better if you're right. I mean you're of all this great looking intelligent crowd you might be right. How many think said dolon? Let me see your hands. Okay one, two.

Okay. How many think it was the makhaira? Okay thirty seven.

I took that Evelyn Wood speed reading course. Nothing. Well you're right it's makhaira. Now why did Paul not use the rafiah? Now rafiah is used in scripture.

Why do you think he didn't say rafiah? Not handy.

It's big. It's heavy. Asked one audience and a little lady about 90 pounds put her hand up. She says, I know why he didn't say Rafiah. Because it's too heavy too heavy for women and were involved in this fight just as much as the men are and she was right. Now the Thracians used the rafiah and the fact is one account there where they just they were on top of this hill and they were

laughing at the Romans because you know these six foot swords and the Romans come in with these all makhaira that's what they used and so they got close enough you know.

So what happened? They swing this big Rafiah around. And lo and behold the Romans duck and their rafiahs keep going like this.

And you know. Next thing you know you've got a makhaira in the kidney. Save Neal Anderson a few bucks.

Forget lithotripsy. Just out pops those kidney stones. So.

Now Rafiah is used in Revelation chapter 1 where you know there the rafiah is coming out of the mouth of Christ. It's a sort of judgment and you know when your head is on the block you're tied down. You know the bigger and the heavier it is the better.

And so it's a double edge rafiah in Revelation chapter 1. But Paul didn't choose Spirit of God didn't have Paul choose the word Rafiah here. Too big unwieldy leaves you open to counterattack. Why didn't he use the acinaces?

A lot of people say oh yeah the Bible the Word of God is wonderful. You know it's great literature. We got to have it. You have it on your coffee table big Bible there. But you don't use it for fighting. We're talking about warfare here.

He's talking about the spiritual warfare that is taking place and you need to have a sword that you can use. Not just around for ornaments. Every pastor has met people that have...they're sword just there for ornaments and you hear a knock on the door and probably heard this pasturing.

It's a pastor, it's a pastor. Hold it. Oh yeah, Hi Pastor John just a minute here. Where's the Bible? Get the Bible. Oh here it is here. Turn that T.V. off or at least change the channel. We'll pick up those magazines. Oh, hello Pastor John here just having little devotions here. Yeah. So what are you reading here? Well looks like it's the Spanish prophet Jeremiah.

Malachi is so old. I try to change it here or that bad dude Obadiah and anyway.

You know it's not for...the word of God isn't just for an ornament there. He's talking about warfare.

He's not talking about. He didn't compare it to the dolon. The Word of God is not deceptive. Oh, a lot of cults will have that. Oh you can't understand this book we have to unveil the secrets we know the mystery of this. We'll let you know what it says. Our priests, our people. We'll tell you what it says.

No other word of God is not like that when Paul wanted to compare the Word of God to the most powerful weapon he could think of that day. It was a weapon that the Roman army and they were the most powerful army that lived up until that time was the mahkira. Every part useful. Both edges sharp, the point sharp. So when Paul said wanted to compare the word of God to something that everybody could use and use effectively. He said take the mahkira of the spirit. Which is the word of God. Now he did so well in that first.

Chris I got one more for you. Take the word.

Here again he has a choice. Two words he can say take the mahkira of the spirit which is the word of God. He could use the word Logos. That deep... well it was an ordinary Greek word that John filled with so much meaning and deepness of knowledge and wisdom and understanding in the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God. Take the

mahkira of the spirit which is the Logos. He could have used that word. Or he could have used the word Rhema. Rhema is a constituent part of the whole.

That's why [Inaudible] or maybe Logos is speaking about the whole says that Rhema is a constituent part of the whole. A phrase a saying in comparison with the whole. So Paul could have said take the Logos or the Rhema. How do you think that he...which word do you think he used here? How many of you think he said the word Logos?

Okay. Quite a few. How many think the word Rhema? Well Rhema is the right word. You say you

sure? Yes I'm sure. This is exactly how our Lord used it didn't he? What happened when when Satan came to him and Satan is identified in this passage, just the evil one they were fighting against. What happened when when Satan came to him? Jesus took his Mahkira out. Turning stones into bread you haven't eaten for 40 days it's not wrong to eat. Nothing wrong with that. You know just just turn the stones into bread. What happened? Out came the mahkira. A rhema, a phrase is saying not the entire word. A phrase from Deuteronomy. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that precedes out the mouth of God.

Victory.

Then again. Jump down from the temple. The test of being a Messiah. 400 feet. Jump down there. You're not even going to get a sprained ankle. Then the Psalmist says it not so for your foot to be moved. You're going to be okay.

Jump. Thou shall not test the Lord thy God.

Or again. Worship me I'll give you all the kingdoms of the earth. Again a rhema, a phrase coming out of Deuteronomy again see. Thou shall worship the lord thy God. And him only shalt thou serve.

So Satan left him for a season. Now how do we apply that to our own lives? What is Satan coming at us with? What's his principal weapon? Doubt. Remember in the garden? God said, Dying. Thou shall die. I should not surely die.

He just doesn't want you to be like him. Has God said? And so when he attacks us

what do we do? You take out a mahkira. How do you use it?

A rhema, a phrase just like just like our Lord did.

I like what Donald Barnhouse has said in the in his book "The Invisible War." He says you can divide the whole Bible up here. Between by this invisible war that the battle lines are drawn in Genesis 3:15. Where God says I'll put enmity between thee and the seed of the woman.

So the battle lines are drawn right there. He says, Genesis 1 to 12. Where's the attack? The attack is against the human race. Why if the human race is wiped out there's no seed because the seed is going to come through the woman it's going to bruise his head. So the attack is against the seed. So a Cain kill killing Abel. The flood. If all those things happened to wipe out the human race. No more seed is going to come.

Genesis 12 to Malachi. The attack now is focused on Israel. Why? Because in Genesis 12 it narrowed it down. It's not just from the human race. It's from Israel that the seed is going to come.

So these battles you read about in the Old Testament aren't just political or geographical or military or economical battles. They're spiritual battles. That the Philistines or the Amalekites can wipe out Israel what happens?

The seed is not going to come that's going to bruise his head and Barnhouse goes on to say the Gospels. The attack is against the seed himself. He's here and we've talked about that a little bit. From Acts to Revelation where is the attack? The seeds of the right hand of the father. You know he's invulnerable to attack. The attack is against the body of the seed. The attack is against you and against me. So he comes at us. He comes at us with his principal weapon. Doubt.

Has God said doubt about salvation. You me when I got down on my knees and invited Jesus Christ into my heart and life. That that changed everything? And instead of going to hell. Now I'm going to heaven I have a new heart, new song.

New Spirit, new destination. All my sins are forgiven. Oh it can't be that way. You got to work hard. You got to do something. You got to help God out. You got to show yourself worthy.

Satan attacks you like that. Out comes your Mahkira. I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed and to him against that day.

Doubt about his work...his book. Is this really the word of God?

What about these things I can't reconcile? It seems it contradicts itself once in a while. Is this really God's word?

Has God said? All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness.

The man or the woman of God might be perfect. Thoroughly furnished into all good works see. Doubt about answered prayer.

Maybe some of you prayed for something this morning or yesterday or some of you prayed for a long time and just as humans like the heavens or brass. What shall you ask in my name that will I do. Doubt about supplying your need. Some of you struggle to get here. Some of you? Probably

all of you. The financial pressures that you're facing here. My God shall supply all your need. According to his riches and glory through Christ Jesus. Doubt about, Are you really here?

Five week exams, a midweek exam will be coming on you and you will be thinking "Man what did I get myself into?" You know I just go out and preach the gospel I don't need all this extra training.

You know I don't....

[Inaudible] said any time spent sharpening a tool is not wasted. I'm already sharp Lord I don't need this extra sharpening. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches and glory [Inaudible] approved under God a work that need not to be ashamed. Rightly dividing the word of truth. Doubt about not being strong enough. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Anxiety. There's lots to worry about. I mean there is just so much stuff to worry about. Be anxious for most of that stuff. Be anxious for nothing but in everything with prayer and supplication that your request be made known unto God.

What a bargain. You give God your anxiety and what does he give you in return? His peace that builds a wall around your heart and your mind.

Discouragement. You do the right thing and you get blamed for it. If when you do well and suffer for it and take it patiently this is acceptable with God. Who got ripped off more than anybody in history? Wasn't it Jesus? He didn't do a single thing wrong.

The only one that went about doing good.

The creature you know. Putting to death the creator. That was the biggest rip off of all time.

What does he say? We're to follow in his steps. Who when he was reviled, reviled not again who suffered he threatened not. The Christian life too difficult. I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed in us.

Loneliness. You can be lonely in seminary. Lo I am with you always. Forsaken. I'll never leave you nor forsake you. Or here's one that Satan uses all the time you know. That the temptation is yours uniquely.

You're just all alone in this. You know if you're only in a different seminary, different class, you know different country, different spouse, different job. It would be all right you know. It's alright

to just you know cheat a little bit here. I know I didn't use those footnotes there but hope he doesn't go to the library. It's just I've too much pressure on me right now. Yeah I won't plagiarize next time or I won't cheat next time. Yeah I won't fudge next year's income tax. You know this pressure this time it's unique this time.

One of Satan's principal weapons, out comes your mahkira see. There is no temptation taking you but such is common to man. You're not the only one that's tempted to lie or to be angry or to lust or to commit adultery. Right now there's probably be thousands and thousands of people committing adultery. You're not the only one there or to have a problem with your thought life. There is no temptation taking you but such is common to man.

But God is faithful who will not suffer to be tempted above what your able. But will through the temptation make a way of escape. Your little twist. Guidance. You're getting...you're going to graduate this year you know. You didn't know what you're going to do after college and so seminary, three years and that you don't have to make a decision but now you're faced with a decision.

What are you going to do? You're going to leave next year. You need to know guidance there. What you're going to do? I will guide you with my eye. Fear. God has not given us a spirit of fear but of love and of power and of self-control.

He will have no fear of bad news. Every day has bad news coming it's way.

Well at least almost every day. He will have no fear of bad news. His heart is steadfast always trusting in the Lord. Or bringing up an old sin.

Now maybe you've been cleansed and you confessed that sin but Satan keeps attacking you. I knew a pastor once that had sinned and the congregation had forgiven him his family had forgiven him and he was restored but Satan kept after him.

How can you be there? How can you get up and preach? What a tragedy you are. You don't belong here you know. You're outta here you know.

Where was his mahkira? He got to the place he was going to take his own life.

Who is he that condemneeth? It is God to justifieth. I've been declared righteous that sin is forgiven. Today's sin is forgiven. Tomorrow's sin is forgiven.

God doesn't love me. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? We're tempted to sin. Those born of God do not practice sin. Or bereavement. It seems people paralyzed with bereavement. Absent from the body present with the Lord. Or you need wisdom. If any of you lack wisdom let them ask of God. I don't know what area of your life Satan attacks where you need victory in. I don't know what pressure points you are facing right now. If I went around the room right now you know we get dozens and dozens of places where you need a rhema.

You need the word of God. You need to use your mahkira effectively. The Psalmist says, Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you. Satan is looking for any advantage, he wants to destroy you. He wants to destroy those of us in leadership at Biola. He wants to destroy the faculty. Rob us of our influence by sin in our life. Satan is looking for this advantage but God has equipped us with his armor to have complete and consistent victory. As I close I just want to mention two brief items about his attack.

First he likes a surprise. He doesn't announce his attack. He doesn't say you know at 10:20 over there you know you're going to see somebody bend over the water cooler and you're going to lust. So watch out. 10:20 stay away from the water cooler. Look out okay. You know he doesn't just announce this in big you know...

He likes to surprise you.

This means you have to be equipped and ready.

Can you imagine a soldier walking down a road you know.

And all of a sudden both [Inaudible]. Hey Harry where's my gun? I don't know. Don't you have it with you? No! I wouldn't be asking if I did. Think you left it back at that last rest stop there. Think it's under that palm tree. What kind of a soldier's that? That's a dead soldier I'll tell you. So you know.

So he doesn't announce this opportunity to lust see. All of a sudden you see it. What happens? I mean I covenant with my eyes that

I might not lust or look upon a woman. Job. Or bring every thought into captivity. Or a hymn with something based on scripture.

Fill your heart and mind. It means you have to know the word of God and you have to be ready for it because he's going to try to surprise you. The second thing is he doesn't play by the Marcus of Queensbury rules. He says, Oh you know I feel sorry for old Richard over there. I'm just going to attack him somewhere else. He's not like that.

I like what Ken Poore says you know he talks about football team lining up.

And here's a guy in the middle of a line there and he's got this big bandage around his arm and a guy [Inaudible] What happened to your arm? Oh I cracked the head of the radius. Cracked the head of the radius? What are you doing in the game? Well championship game here I've got to play man. It's ok. As long as we don't hurt it. Would you just do me a favor and not hit it? Oh yeah I won't do that. I won't hit it.

You know his first assignment the guy is supposed to pull a running play to the left. What happens? He doesn't. He just hits that helmet on that guy's head of his radius.

They line up again. He says, I thought you said you weren't going to hit it? You were going to be a sport? Oh did I hit your elbow there? I'm sorry about that.

Then they made so much yardage in the last play. They do it again. They carried this guy out and his elbow is going 360 you know. That's the way Satan is he doesn't say, Oh you know I have a particular problem. I understand that. I'm going to try somebody else for a while. He wants to destroy you.

He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but you can have victory by taking the makhaira. Take the makhaira.

The sharp effective. This is effective for your victory in your life. This and of course the other one offensive weapon is mentioned prayer. Take the makhaira of the spirit which is the word of God. How do you use it? You use it as a rhema. There are seven 7,000 rhemas in this book. Sufficient for whatever need you have. The Psalmist writes, By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

Let's pray. Father I thank you for your word.

That is alive and sharper than a two edged makhaira. Thank you for your armor that helmet of salvation. Just given to us. A breastplate of righteousness. Our loins gurd about with truth and our feet shed with it the gospel of peace and that thick door like shield of faith. To quench the fiery darts of that evil one. And I thank you for your word. Thank you for these men and women father who are here to be equipped to handle the word of God properly. And to use it effectively in their own lives and to help others be equipped to use it effectively.

We thank you for our staff and for our faculty that are committed to the inerrancy of your word and standing surely upon it that God has said and it is true for their lives and for their testimony they believe the word and they have incarnated in their life. Father I pray that for those that are struggling here I don't know what their struggle is but you know. Father may they be encouraged that you want them to have victory and you made the resources available to them through your armor. Bless and encourage them this day. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.