

2026-06-28 Points

Title: The Tug of War: Light Versus Darkness in the Christian Life

Sermon Summary:

This sermon introduces a new series called "Tug of War," exploring the ongoing spiritual conflicts Christians face between light and darkness, flesh and spirit, and God's will versus our own. Using Revelation 12 as a primary text, the pastor illustrates how Satan actively opposes God's people from the birth of Christ through today. The message emphasizes that grace is not passive—it requires active participation and response. While salvation is a gift we don't deserve, it calls us to transformation and holy living. The sermon challenges believers to examine whether they're truly seeking God or taking His grace for granted, reminding them that God promises to be found by those who genuinely seek Him. The pastor stresses that victory comes through the blood of the Lamb, our testimony, and willingness to stand firm even unto death. This spiritual tug of war requires believers to anchor themselves in God's strength, live with intentional holiness, and recognize their need for both God and the Christian community.

Key Points:

- The spiritual conflict between light and darkness has existed since Genesis and continues today
- Satan actively pursues believers, seeking to destroy faith and testimony
- Grace is God's undeserved favor, but it calls for a response of obedient living and transformation
- Believers overcome through three things: the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and not loving their lives unto death
- Seeking God results in being found by Him; forsaking God results in being forsaken
- Taking grace for granted leads to spiritual complacency and vulnerability to sin
- The Christian life is not passive—it requires active participation, like pulling together in a tug of war
- Living authentically for Christ draws others to salvation when they see God's peace in our storms

- Community and the body of Christ are essential; we cannot win spiritual battles alone
- Holiness and righteous living matter as our response to Christ's sacrifice

Scripture Reference:

- Revelation 12:1-17 (primary focus)
- Genesis 1 (Let there be light)
- 2 Chronicles 15:1-8
- Various references to parables and teachings of Jesus
- References to Paul's writings on being "more than conquerors"

Stories:

- The account of Mary giving birth to Jesus and fleeing to Egypt to escape Herod's attempt to kill the infant king
- Personal anecdote about Terry Junk falling asleep in church and startling awake, thinking he was falling
- Illustration of a man who claimed to have quit smoking 395 times, demonstrating how easy it is to fall back into sin
- Reference to tug of war competitions, both over mud pits and in gym class, as metaphor for spiritual warfare
- Mark Grantham's testimony of being at Mayo Clinic for a month seeking lung transplant and God's provision
- The pastor's reflection on 47 years of marriage and growing closer together rather than apart
- John's exile to the Isle of Patmos (described as like Alcatraz) where he received the Revelation despite being silenced for speaking about Jesus