

THE LORD'S AVENGING ANGELS

A Message to our Sons and Daughters in the Armed
Forces of the United States of America

July Fourth, 2004

Romans 13:1-4

¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed [sanctioned] by God. ²Therefore whoever resists [*sets himself up against*] the authority resists the ordinance [established order] of God, and those who resist will bring [down] judgment [condemnation] on themselves. ³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. ⁴For he is God's minister [servant] to you for good. But if you do [what is] evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister [servant], an avenger to execute wrath [punishment, vengeance] on him who practices evil.

Romans 3:8

'Let us do evil that good may come of it.' Those who say such things are condemned and their condemnation is just."

Introduction:

- There are those who question whether there is such a thing as a morally defensible or justifiable war and whether the war in Iraq and against terrorism is such a war...
- Does the Bible endorse a Christian prerogative in taking up arms and using lethal force if necessary, as a Peace Officer or the armed forces, and if necessary, when called upon to resist evil and engage in warfare, in light of the 6th commandment which commands us not to kill?
- How does one conclude that it is morally justifiable to wage war upon one's enemies?
- If War has been deemed necessary, how does a Christian engage in warfare? Are there limits in how a Christian soldier or officers are to fight?
- How can we be assured that America has currently entered a morally Justifiable War, and is there a doctrine to which American armed forces are held accountable in times of war?
- The Christian Just War Theory is a 1500 year old attempt to answer the question: When is it permissible for a Christian and a Christian Nation to wage war (jus en bello) and: What are the limitations in the way we wage war (jus ad bellum)? It answers the "when" and "how" questions.
- The first Christian thinker to write extensively about the subject was the fifth century theologian, St. Augustine of Hippo. Augustine understood war to be a logical extension of Civil Government, which in the writings of Paul in Romans 13, was ordained and put into place by God as we just read in our Scripture text this morning.
- Augustine didn't believe that all wars were morally justifiable. He wrote **"It makes a great difference by which causes and under which**

authorities men undertake the wars that must be waged.”

- This led Augustine to describe the conditions under which war could be waged, and what was required to Wage a morally Justifiable War
- From his writings the Current Just War Doctrine was established based on 7 major criteria and a few assorted underlying principles, which our President and our armed forces along with our allies, have obliged themselves to abide by in our waging of war against our barbaric enemies.

It is my intention this morning to show our troupes how they are being represented in most Evangelical churches in America, how the war is being addressed, and how their cause and motives are being perceived and understood. I will address four things for which the soldiers of this country should be applauded and encouraged: The **Rightness of their Response** to threat of terrorism; The **Rightness of their motives** in joining the armed forces in order to go to the middle east and wage war upon our enemies; The **Rightness of their intent** to settle for nothing less than victory over our enemies and the completion of their mission, and the **Rightness of their moral clarity** that helps them keep their bearing in the chaos of the theater of war.

Abraham Lincoln once said something that every soldier at one time or another secretly hopes...Lincoln's greatest concern was –

“ not whether God is on our side. My great concern is to be on God's side.”

And it would be a great privilege for me if I could echo the counsel of every brave chaplain who has labored to answer this question, that indeed, there is a way to ascertain directly whether our current war with Iraq and with terrorism around the world has the stamp of God's general approval...and I would like to begin by drawing attention firstly, to -

I. THE RIGHTNESS OF THE RESPONSE OF OUR SOLDIERS

A. Just War theory rests on a Just Response to a Just Cause

1. War may be waged only to save innocent lives, to insure that people can live decently and to protect their natural rights to live in freedom.
2. The Just Cause has to be the actual reason for going to war, which provides the right intention for waging war upon one's enemies.
3. It is not enough to do the right thing; one must do the right thing for the right reason and motive.
4. The only Just Cause in a Just War is to bring about a Just Peace, and to bring down the Lord's sword of vengeance upon the heads of those who have incurred the blood

debt by committing acts of evil and murder against innocent people.

5. St. Paul told us plainly this very thing when explaining why the civil authorities are armed and authorized to use lethal force, when necessary, to stop the evil doer and strike terror in the heart of the evil doer. And the counsel of scripture is **for the one authorized to use deadly force in such a case, to do so** with the knowledge that he or she is exacting at that moment, God's avenging justice on the behalf of the citizenry.
6. Now, in light of Just War theory, which by the way, our president has bound our troops to abide by: is the current US response to terrorism and the one time terrorist dictator, Saddam Hussein, just and right?
7. And it only takes common sense to see clearly that -

B. Bin Laden's Wrongful Declaration of **JIHAD** on the USA and the West Demand Such a Just Response

1. Long before the September 11 terrorist attacks on America, in the month of February, 1998, Osama bin Laden and four other terrorist leaders of radical Islamist groups issued a religious ruling or fatwa, calling for jihad (holy war) against "the crusader-Zionist alliance" in the following language:

In compliance with God's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of the lands of Islam. . . . This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God, "and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together," and "fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God."

2. While there were many more examples of bin Laden's thinking that emerged after the September 11 attacks, this fatwa stands as a fundamental statement of his calling for a worldwide campaign of violence against America and the West. It lays out the justification not only for the attacks of September 11 but also for other terrorist attacks linked to bin Laden's al-Qaeda group and other splinter terrorist

groups, notably, the bombings of the two American embassies in East Africa and of the U.S.S. *Cole*.

3. Bin Laden's fatwa also provides a warrant for future attacks by "**every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it by whatever means necessary to do it**"—in short, bin Laden has called for continuing acts of terror, torture and murder by all Muslims against all "**Americans and their allies**".
4. He has confessed that his one and only ambition in life is to die a martyr and go to heaven, and that the way he is to do this is by **waging war on every living American at home and abroad**.
5. The original understanding of jihad in the sense of warfare referred to the believer's inner struggle for righteousness, much like the Christian doctrine of sanctification.
6. It wasn't until 8th and 9th century scholars versed in the interpretation of Islamic law developed it into an ideology of literal warfare waged upon those whom they determined were hostile to Islam.
7. This new interpretation of Jihad formed the false idea of jihad as an organized, armed warfare against all non-Muslims living outside the boundaries of Islamic countries (abode of Islam), forcing them to either convert to Islam, or be annihilated.
8. The last hundred years or so have seen the development of another line of interpretation of jihad. It first appeared in North Africa as **an ideology for resistance against colonialism**; then by 1960 it was being used as a justification for terrorist attacks against Israel, and in the 1970s and 1980s it was adapted to **justify armed struggle** by terror and assassination in such states as Iran, Egypt, and Algeria against rulers who were nominally Muslim but were judged to be tools of the West. It is out of this tradition that bin Laden's fatwa has emerged.
9. Bin Laden's radical form of jihad makes several critical assumptions not found in the traditional concept or in the mainstream jihad theory, setting him apart from other Muslims.
 - a. First, the **abode of Islam** is conceived as any territory whose population is mainly Muslim and which was once part of the historical nation of *Islam*.
 - b. By this reasoning **any non-Islamic state** existing within the territory of what once was known historically as the abode of *Islam*, as well as **all non-Islamic presence** within Islamic countries, must be resisted

and subdued or eliminated by acts of violence and terror.

- c. Furthermore, “**aggressors**” are deemed to be all those who support the non-Islamic presence of others in or near Islamic countries, so that the usual lines of distinction between combatants and noncombatants are erased, with the result that all individuals are considered acceptable targets, including civilians (women and children) and all Muslims including elderly men, women and children are potential combatants.
 - d. Further, there are no limits on means in this struggle (however these Jihadists wish to attack, and whatever they wish to attack with, including chemical weapons, and weapons of mass destruction, suicide bombers, etc, as well as the number of people killed) are not accountable to any accord or agreement. They can justify their acts of barbarism because they are doing what is evil so that their own notion of good can abound.
 - e. Finally, all Muslims are faced with the duty to take part in this struggle, so that such a war ultimately becomes one involving individuals rather than an organized army representing a recognized country. Again, anyone who accepts this duty—men of fighting age, women, children, or the aged or infirm—becomes a combatant in this chaotic, shapeless war.
10. This extreme interpretation of the idea of jihad treats the simple presence of Christians and Jews in dominantly Muslim societies or near Muslim countries as an act of aggression.
 11. It also leaves no room for differences of interpretation as to what Islam requires; its reading of Islamic law is narrow and unyielding on doctrine and behavior alike. Social developments identified as being the result of modern western influence are rejected as un-Islamic, even if large numbers of Muslims have accepted them without losing their faith. Those Muslims that refuse to repent, are classified as infidels, and become legitimate targets themselves.
 12. bin Laden’s fatwa takes the radical line of jihad to new extremes when it calls for any and all Muslims to kill any and all Americans—“**civilians and military**” alike—“**in any country in which it is possible to do it.**”
 13. International terrorism of the sort we have seen since the late 1960s, and of which we had a direct national experience on September 11, 2001, is a deliberate assault, through the murder of innocent civilians, on the freedom

and order in world affairs. That is why the terror networks must be dismantled or destroyed. One does not simply try to understand the rationale of such barbaric insanity. One does not make concessions with such evil doers. One cannot come up with a policy of appeasement toward such cold blooded, calculating murderers. One must respond forthrightly, forcefully and full throttle.

14. The peace of international order is also under grave threat when vicious, aggressive regimes acquire weapons of mass destruction—weapons that we must assume, on the basis of their treatment of their own citizens, they will not hesitate to use against others.

15. That is why there is a moral *obligation* to rid the world of this tyrannical threat to the peace and security of all.

Peace, rightly understood, demands it.

16. Franklin D. Roosevelt put it succinctly when he said

“When you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush him.”

17. Thomas Jefferson was clear on this point when he said

“I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.”

18. It is obvious and clear when these things are understood and September 11th is seen in light of them, that our President and his cabinet, and our military leaders and the men and women under their command made up of Americas finest, **were right in their response** to the threat of terrorism, acts of terrorism, and the threat of more terrorism supported and financed by Saddam Hussein, among others.

19. These facts have not been enough to convince a small minority of cowards, who have sought to established a policy of passivity and appeasement as the right response to those who would do us harm or have done us harm.

20. According to Albert Einstein,

“The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.”

18. I just read an article the other day on the **enlistment statistics** since September 11th. In spite of the fact that anyone going to Iraq has a 4-5 percent chance of getting

hurt, that fact has not caused a decline in volunteers, despite the fact that the liberal media reported that because of these facts recruiting would suffer.

19. But the United States Army has noted statistics that once again prove that the liberal media understands nothing about the stature and character and gravity of today's soldier. The army has discovered that the increasing number of volunteers who are responding to their country's need, do not sign up for the educational benefits or the money. **No, the number one major incentive is plain old American patriotism.** These young men and women love their country and believe in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and out of gratitude and a sense of debt to their country and those who fought before them so they could live free, that they have responded. And I am humbled and filled with gratitude that they did, aren't you?
20. These young Americans are responding and signing in and suiting up to serve their country because they believe that Islamic terrorists pose a real threat to the safety and liberty of the United States, and that the attack on our country warrants a just and forceful and resolute response.
21. Today's soldiers are made up of Patriots of all kinds of races, professions, salaries and educations. Many, many a soldier responded to 9/11 by quitting lucrative, high paying jobs to enlist for active duty because it was their patriotic responsibility. Many cut short their agenda to join and still do. There are more joining than is needed, and they continue to join. The more they hear of the danger, and the casualties, the more they join, out of the sheer sense of patriotic duty and the rightness of this war.
20. May the God of righteousness and peace, Who alone is wholly just, have mercy on our troupes as they seek to bring about a just and peaceful conclusion to the injustices brought down upon our nation and it's allies by these sunken-eyed, soul-less barbarians who call evil good and good evil.
21. Secondly, I would like to applaud -

II. THE RIGHTNESS OF OUR SOLDIERS MOTIVES

A. Can War Ever Be Considered To Be Motivated By Love?

1. When Thomas Aquinas wrote about the subject of Just War¹ he did not do so in the section on justice, but rather in the section on charity, specifically, in dealing with the attributes of God, and more to the point, the love of God.

¹ in the *Summa Theologiae* (II-II.40),

2. He made it clear that war is not a vice that is opposed to the love of God. On the contrary, **war-making**, when just, can be understood as a form of love, in that it is a loving response made by the soldier on behalf of his threatened country.
3. It would be mistaken to assume that war is always contrary to peace, because peace in and of itself is not always desirable. That's right; some forms of peace are not always desirable since not all peace is always just and deserving to be preserved.
4. Nazi Germany, for example, provided a peace and order for most of those countries it conquered, **who were willing to accept Nazi rule**. But no one wishes to argue that the peace provided by Nazis was the sort of peace that ought to be preserved or protected, for it was a peace founded on injustice and inhumanity and cruelty and tyranny and oppression such as marked the precious people of Iraq under the despotism of the snake, Saddam Hussein.
5. War, for Thomas Aquinas, could be a means to achieving a just peace as well as a just means to destroy an unjust peace (such as one established by the Nazis).
6. American soldiers are risking life and limb in Iraq and Afghanistan in order to keep a just peace and fight a just war because these are acts motivated from the virtue of charity; of loving justice.
7. Just soldiering is something Christians ought to do out of love for God and neighbor, and thus it is the most "human" thing we can do in certain situations, and it is this courageous altruism that motivates our young freedom fighters in the middle east, to which we can all say unanimously this morning, that **their motives are right and just and charitable**.
8. Calvin, too, looks at the soldier as an agent of God's love. When addressing St. Paul's comments in Romans 13 about the armed civil servant being God's agent of wrath on those who do evil, he argued that St. Paul supported the notion that the soldier is just as much an agent of God's love as he is of God's wrath, for the two characteristics are harmonious in God. Calvin argues in this way because he holds that to soldier justly—to restrain evil out of love for neighbor—is a godly thing to do, finding it's example in the nature of God Himself, and it's ordination in the will of God for civil authorities.
9. So again, that which motivates America's soldiers and that of our trusted allies, can be said to be right because they are motivated by justice and the law of love.
10. I want to share with you an e-mail from a chaplain on the front lines during Good Friday, 2003.

Morale, sky high...extra intensity...friends are on the line. The senior nco's and officers here, feel the pull the most. They have served with or trained everyone on the line...The Corps is a small community. This is very personal. If a person can do something to help the outcome of the fight...they'll find a way...it's that kind of day...all for one, one for all. I divide the day; Holy Week service planning, convoy prayers, and COC intercessory prayers.

**First, I go to the DIV Chaplain office to meet with the command Chaplain...the fighting Irishman. What a man. RC Christians...be proud...you've got a great priest here. He spares nothing to get to his marines. He loves marines and he loves God. He waded into ----
----- during the fire fight, three days ago...to provide ministry at the aid station...came back weary but satisfied he was where he was needed. He's on the road, to all the FOB's ministering to marines. I had the privilege of praying for him, this morning. If he goes down the morale in this Division would take a huge hit. They love him.**

Second, I work to coordinate Good Friday, Easter Sunrise and Protestant Easter Service. Having services in a war zone is a little different.

- 1. We have to worry about getting large numbers of people in one place. One mortar round into the right place and you could kill a lot of marines.**
- 2. Organists are in short supply and we don't have an organ. Music?**
- 3. We are going to worship and it will be well attended...we need Easter...because we live in the valley of the shadow of death...we need the resurrection.**

Third, twice a day I go to _____...the combat operations center...which is housed in _____ poorly lit and the hub of fighting the battle...I stand in the corner and pray for each person/position and those they represent. I don't know many of them, but God does. I pray for wisdom, strength, mercy, endurance and God's presence for each warrior all those they serve or represent. I cover the Cave and the

battle field as I look at live imagery projected on the wall. I don't know how the marines do it...but the COC is loaded with stark looking marines. The senior NCO's all look like NFL lineman. The junior officers look like marathon runners and the mid-grade officers look like NFL halfbacks...the senior officers are lean, tanned and serious...deadly serious. The place exudes the warrior spirit. If you are a civilian I can't explain it and won't apologize for it. If you are a veteran you don't need to have it explained...the warrior spirit. These marines are in a street fight. They don't have the word 'lose' in their vocabulary. They've been bloodied and their anger is up. The intensity in the COC is contagious. This is a tribe of warriors. They exist to close with and destroy the enemy. They have their tribal mores, rituals and rites. Their enemy has desecrated members of the tribe and taunted the marines. They've asked for a fight. The marines are in full pursuit and absolutely determined to annihilate their foe. I'm sure that sounds harsh to politically correct ears and those for whom this type of violence is anachronistic. It does not sound foreign here...it is status quo. We are in a violent land, with an evil element and they are having violence visited upon them. There is no room here for half measures. This is a test of wills...one side will prevail. That is clearly understood and never discussed...it is obvious. We aren't playing paintball...we are at war.

Fourth, Convoy prayers...convoys go out of here regularly. I hunt them down...pass out a small card with a convoy prayer on it and then gather whoever wants to pray and we pray. The number of prayers is going up, hourly, as the ambushes continue. Here's how intense it has become...today's standard preconvoy brief now includes the following: "If you drive into the kill zone...two options...drive through and on, or reverse and drive out. Do not stop. If you are blocked into the kill zone...displace from the vehicle, find cover, fix the target, engage, maneuver and destroy the hostile forces. Target selection...rules have changed...avoid civilians, if possible. Hostile forces are now using civilians as shields. We are not interested in losing more marines. If you can avoid putting civilians in your line of fire, avoid it. If not, fire to take out the hostile forces. Implication? Chilling...we've entered a new dimension. We are

fighting an enemy who respects no laws of humanity, knows no rules of land warfare and gives no quarter. How do we fight, without becom[ing] barbarians ourselves?

Fifth, ministry of presence...in a place this small...I walk from shop to shop and just say, 'hi'...can't tell you the number of times someone says... "Hey, chappy...it's great to have you here." Something about seeing a chaplain is calming to folks this close to the fight. Good Friday in -----while you're having lunch I'll lead the evening Good Friday service. We will remember our Savior who willingly laid down His life that we might live...and we'll be thinking about young marines and soldiers who are willingly putting their lives on the line so Iraqis can be free...no greater love hath a man than to lay down his life for his brother...

Good Friday to you...

22. Thirdly, I'd like to call attention to -

III. THE RIGHTNESS OF OUR SOLDIERS INTENTIONS

A. Another Criteria for Engaging in a Just War Is That There Must Be A Resolve to Win (the Probability of Success - you wage war with the intent to win)

1. Let us be done with the double speak nonsense of there being any other goal in war than to stop the enemy cold.
2. The one goal of the armies of right against the armies of wrong is to win, be triumphant, be victorious, as quick as possible and as thoroughly as possible.
3. It is wrong to wage a war that cannot be won or without the clear intent to win. Fighting a war with the intent on winning it can be the only right determination when risking the lives of the young men and women called upon to put themselves in harms way to wage war in service to their country.
4. There are those who hide their cowardice and fear behind a gentile and rationale philosophy of appeasement at all costs, and who would send our sons and daughters into the gaping maw of an enemy with no intent on dealing the crushing blow.
5. Perhaps those who believe that pacifism is backed by the historic Christian faith and Biblical teachings (which they are not) would be surprised to know that one of the major points

in Aquinas and Calvin's writings on the moral approach to warfare is that — contrary to some of the prevailing views of the left and media elite — **a failure to engage in a just war is nothing less than a failure of virtue**, a failure to act well, to respond rightly and justly in the midst of injustice and evil.

6. An odd corollary to this conclusion is that **it is a greater evil for Christians to fail to wage a just war than it is for unbelievers.**
7. When an unbeliever fails to go to war, the cause may be a lack of courage, prudence, or justice. He may be a coward or simply indifferent to evil. These are failures of natural moral virtue.
8. **But when Christians fail to engage in just war, it may involve all of these natural failures as well, but it will also, and more significantly, involve a failure of the virtue of love.** The Christian who fails to use force to aid his neighbor when prudence dictates that force is the best way to render that aid is an uncharitable, unloving Christian, I don't care how many chapters and verses from the Bible he tries to justify his cowardice with.
9. Following this line of reasoning, Christians who willingly and knowingly refuse to engage in a just war do a vicious thing: **they fail to show love toward their neighbor as well as toward God.**
10. This was not the attitude of the great officers of our country, like that great General of fire and steel who led the southern armies of the Civil war - that exemplary Christian soldier, **General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson**, who once said —

"When war does come, my advice is to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard."
11. And there have been many a god-fearing Christian who has distinguished themselves and brought others to Christ by their godly example during battle, to belittle this point.
12. Ask any soldier and he or she will tell you they much prefer to wage war under a battle chief who is clear in his intentions and objectives and resolve to defeat the enemy, such as Dwight D. Eisenhower, who once said as our nation was going to war -

"When you appeal to force, there's one thing you must never do - lose."
13. General Douglas Macarthur once said

"It is fatal to enter any war without the will to win it."

14. The great Churchill made his intentions and that of the British military very clear when he said in one of his famous speeches –

"I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory -- victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival."

15. And let us not forget the solidarity of Just Intentions and motives shared with us by Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair, our faithful ally and friend, expressed in his remarks as he mustered the awesome might of Britain to join with us in our Just Cause,

***"So what do we do?
Don't overreact some say. We aren't.
We haven't lashed out. No missiles on the first night just for effect.***

Don't kill innocent people. We are not the ones who waged war on the innocent. We seek the guilty. Look for a diplomatic solution. There is no diplomacy with Bin Laden or the Taliban regime. State an ultimatum and get their response. We stated the ultimatum; they haven't responded.

Understand the causes of terror. Yes, we should try, but let there be no moral ambiguity about this: nothing could ever justify the events of 11 September, and it is to turn justice on its head to pretend it could.

The action we take will be proportionate; targeted; we will do all we humanly can to avoid civilian casualties. But understand what we are dealing with. Listen to the calls of those passengers on the planes. Think of the children on them, told they were going to die.

Think of the cruelty beyond our comprehension as amongst the screams and the anguish of the innocent, those hijackers drove at full throttle planes laden with fuel into buildings where tens of thousands worked.

They have no moral inhibition on the slaughter of the innocent. If they could have murdered not 7,000 but 70,000 does anyone doubt they would have done so and rejoiced in it?

There is no compromise possible with such people, no meeting of minds, no point of understanding with such terror. Just a choice: defeat it or be defeated by it. And defeat it we must.”

And along these same lines of the rightness of the intentions of our brave soldiers is that –

B. Our Troupes are Bound By the Criteria of Comparative Justice

1. I say to you, sons of thunder and daughters of lightning, that no one needs to tell you that the evil you have responded to and are fighting against has been rightly discerned to be bad enough to justify the “killing” of other human beings.
2. Going to war against a heartless enemy assumes this. And many a Christian soldier has asked their chaplains how to square this with the 6th commandment
3. Note: the 6th commandment forbids “murder” (murder for any reason is always wrong)
4. However, killing is not always classified as murder
5. The idea of Just War Criteria is to help our civil leaders discern when killing is and is not murder
6. It is never just or Biblical to be led by the rationale that has as its motto ***“Let us do evil, that good may result”*** and the Bible makes it clear that the condemnation and destruction of those who do such things from such a rationale base is, itself, just (Romans 3:8)

7. The bible as a whole teaches that there are some actions that are categorically evil, so that no consideration of results can be used to justify such evil deeds (Romans 3:8)
8. A just War is not the kind of war in which murder is justified (there is no such war)
9. Rather, a Just War is the type of war in which a warrior takes care that none of his/her killing is murderous, and it is a settling thought to know that our young sons and daughters are waging this war in such a way that no other war or soldier could be said to have ever taken such precaution that civilians are not needlessly harmed or killed, even in some cases, to the detriment of their own safety.
10. We have all heard about the late Pat Tillman, the famous NFL football player who responded to 9/11 and the declaration of war on Iraq by leaving the NFL and a salary of over 3 million dollars to enlist in the Army's Rangers.
11. But not very many people have heard about another young man by the name of Spc. Daniel Paul Unger of Exeter, California, who was killed in action May 25th. He was 19 years old, and left a young lady he was planning to marry when he fulfilled his tour of duty. A police captain and personal friend of the family said that if all young men were like Daniel Unger, he wouldn't have a job.
12. Unger's base camp, located in the Sunni Triangle South of Baghdad. He was part of the 1st Battalion, 185th Armored Regiment, 81st Separate Armor Brigade, Alpha Company.
13. Unger's camp came under attack about 3:30 p.m. local time. All the soldiers took cover as the first rounds of mortar shells exploded around the base. After that initial volley, the soldiers headed for the safety of several bunkers.
14. But Daniel Unger first thought of the safety of the Iraqi civilian workers he was protecting, who had become paralyzed with fear by the first rounds, and hesitated as the mortar shells started landing again. Daniel Unger, taking no thought for his own safety, ran toward them and personally guided them to a bunker, making sure they got in first. Just as the last Iraqi ducked into the safety of the bunker, shrapnel from another mortar round hit Daniel. Medics arrived, but it was too late.
15. Daniel was 17 when he asked his parents for permission to join the California National Guard. The family prayed about it for six months. And at age 17 1/2, he joined the military and never looked back. In March, he shipped out for Iraq, arriving in Kuwait on his 19th birthday.
16. His father, Marc Unger, a Pastor and karate instructor, when first told that his son had been killed,

17. ***"No one took his life, he gave his life,"*** he said. ***"He willingly gave his life so that someone else could live."***

18. Marc Unger then picked up a Bush-Cheney campaign poster from a nearby table, and half weeping declared -

"We support our president. We support our military," he said, waving the poster. ***"I'm terribly sorry that it was my son who lost his life as a hero in the service of his country. But someone's life is going to be lost and my son was not going to let someone else die in his place. My son honestly felt before God that God wanted him to join the military."***

19. This kind of Christian, Christ-like sacrifice is repeated over and over numerous times daily by these high caliber men and women. Yes it is difficult to keep from hitting civilian targets when the enemy your fighting cares so little for human life that he will use innocent civilians from his own country and of his own religious beliefs as human shields as he fires upon our sons and daughters. But on the whole, as a rule, these soldiers will lay down their lives in a minute to save the life of an Iraqi citizen, just like Daniel Unger did.

20. In no other war has there been **more** precaution taken against civilian casualties, nor has the technological advances existed that could guarantee that such casualties be held to such a minimum as has been the case in this war.

18. This is yet another reason for American citizens to be proud of the way their warriors are conducting themselves in battle, while fighting an enemy that has no qualms about slaughtering innocent men, women and children; indeed, they purposely target them, and intentionally kill them by the thousands.

19. Our freedom fighters represent the best in American civility and humanity, while they wage war against those who epitomize barbarity in all it's cruel and merciless forms.

20. In closing, I would like to mention one last point, calling attention to -

IV. THE RIGHTNESS OF YOUR MORAL CLARITY

A. The Fog of War

1. Tolstoy' wrote in his epic, *War and Peace*,² about a thing called "***the fog of war***" that commonly descends on the field of battle, obscuring the soldier's sense of Justice and Rightness, dimming his/her moral clarity.
2. There is a loss of order and familiar patterns of action, with chaos taking over.
3. Some have taken the concept of "the fog of war" and suggested by it that all warfare necessarily takes place beyond the reach of moral reason.
4. Thus **moral muteness** in a time of war becomes, according to them, a natural moral posture born of fear, born of indifference, born of cynicism about the human capacity to promote justice, freedom, and order, etc. But whatever its psychological, spiritual, or intellectual origins, moral muteness in wartime is a deficient and dangerous form of moral judgment that rips the humanity out of the soldiers soul
5. Hogwash! The reason we can stand by the fact that this is not the case with our brave sons and daughters waging war upon the enemies of freedom and Biblical faith, is because the very reason Christian theologians came up with the Just War tradition was to provide the soldier whose cause is just to have moral clarity in battle without such a loss of reason. Listen to the moral clarity and steadfast faith in this prayer called The Special Forces Prayer:

The Special Forces Prayer

Almighty God, Who art the Author of liberty and the Champion of the oppressed, hear our prayer.

We the men of Special Forces, acknowledge our dependence upon Thee in the preservation of human freedom. Go with us as we seek to defend the defenseless and to free the enslaved.

May we ever remember that our nation, whose oath "In God We Trust" expects that we shall acquit ourselves with honor, that we may never bring shame upon our faith, our families, or our fellow men

Grant us wisdom from Thy mind, courage from Thine heart, and protection by Thine hand. It is for Thee that we do battle, and to Thee belongs the victor's crown, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power and Glory forever.

AMEN.

² In Book Three

6. There was no moral ambiguity in that prayer, brethren, nor a foggy faith. I dare say there is less moral ambiguity and more practical Christian faith in many of these battalions and platoons than can be found in many a church here in America. Where else is one's faith in the goodness and love of God tested than in the carnage and cruelty of war? And yet many who have been there and witnessed these soldiers faith under fire, attest that their faith is strong, and many have made their peace with God, so that whether they live or die, they are at peace with their situation. Their moral clarity is unimpeachable and immovable.
7. For fifteen hundred years the just war tradition—and to do all of this in a way that recognizes the distinctive realities of war and one's responsibilities under Almighty God to wage war when one's cause is just.
8. The just war argument allows men and women soldiers to **avoid the trap of moral muteness**, to think through the tangle of problems involved in the decision to go to war and in the conduct of war itself.
 - i. The Bible says there is a time for war and a time for peace. The question then remains: "When's the right time?" The Bible says we ought to fight: **In order to preserve freedom; In order to defend innocent people; In order to stop the spread of evil.**
 - ii. The Bible makes very clear that God has authorized the government to enforce the law and punish offenders. Romans 13:4 tells us the civil servant that preserves the peace, whether peace officer or soldier, **"does not bear the sword in vain [or for nothing]."** And his/her arms and skill in combat is meant by God to strike terror in the heart of terrorists, and thus stop them from carrying out their murderous plans.
 - iii. The concept of a divinely sanctioned agent of God's justice and vengeance called the **AVENGER OF BLOOD**, is found in the Old Testament. The Avenger of Blood was a person, usually the nearest kinsman of a murdered man, whose duty it was to avenge his death by bringing justice to bear upon the murderer – that is, by killing the murderer. The N.T. book of Romans, chapter 13, cast the peace officer and soldier in that light. They are the modern day version of the Lord's avenging Angels, ordained ministers of justice and vengeance unto all who

would do or have done evil. In this light and context, what they are doing is to be seen as God's ordained will. As Paul reminded us in the beginning of this message – the soldier

“is God's minister [servant], an avenger to execute wrath [punishment, vengeance] on him who practices evil.

19. In the movie FIRST KNIGHT, King Arthur shares his own moral clarity in the midst of the threat of aggressive action from his enemy Malagant, when he says resolutely:

There is a peace that is only to be found on the other side of war, and if that battle must be fought, then I will fight it!

20. How very much like King Arthur our President George W. Bush sounded, when with moral clarity and resoluteness he said during his state of the Union address January 28, 2004

Tonight I have a message for the men and women who will keep the peace, members of the American Armed Forces: Many of you are assembling in or near the Middle East, and some crucial hours may lay ahead. In those hours, the success of our cause will depend on you. Your training has prepared you. Your honor will guide you. You believe in America, and America believes in you.

Sending Americans into battle is the most profound decision a President can make. The technologies of war have changed; the risks and suffering of war have not. For the brave Americans who bear the risk, no victory is free from sorrow. This nation fights reluctantly, because we know the cost and we dread the days of mourning that always come.

We seek peace. We strive for peace. And sometimes peace must be defended. A future lived at the mercy of terrible threats is no peace at all. If war is forced upon us, we will fight in a just cause and by just means -- sparing, in every way we can, the innocent. And if war is forced upon us, we will fight with the full force and might of the United States military -- and we will prevail.

We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone. We do not know -- we do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life, and all of history. May He guide us now. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

21. I agree with our President, and I would like to say to all you young men and women who have answered the call to serve on behalf of our country, on behalf of our gathered congregation, The Fresno Christian Growth Center, and on behalf of countless thousands of bigger and smaller congregations throughout California and the United States of America, that we are praying for you: for your safety, for your courage under fire, and skill in battle; for your faith to endure and be spoken well of; that your hope doesn't fade; that if you haven't made peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that you will settle this matter by talking with your chaplain, or calling upon His name now in faith; and we pray for the success of your mission and of your safe return home to your loved ones.
22. If any of you fine men and women of the armed forces of the United States of America would like to request special and specific prayer, we want you to know we would be privileged to pray for you. Just send your prayer request to The Fresno Christian Growth Center, 3385 E. Shields Ave, Fresno, Ca 93726
23. May God encourage you, embolden you, preserve and protect you, and be with you and yours, and may the peace of god rule in your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, for it's in Jesus name we pray. Amen.