**“They Did Their Duty Into Eternity”**

Prepared by Nathan Morrison for Sunday August 13th, 2023

Text: Ephesians 6:10-18 Scripture Reading: Hebrews 10:34-39

Intro

1. Inspired by “The Last Six Seconds,” a speech given by Lt. Gen. John Kelly, 11/13/10 before the Semper Fi Society in St. Louis, MO about two US Marines on April 22, 2008 *(****READ*** *Excerpt):*
   1. Two Corporals in the U.S. Marines (from different backgrounds) assigned to guard a gate to a base in Ramadi, Iraq and told, “Let no unauthorized personnel or vehicle pass.”
   2. Suicide bomber in truck barreled down on their position.
   3. They stood their ground, fired their weapons, and did “their duty into eternity” as the truck exploded killing them but saving the 150 lives inside the complex.
   4. Incident caught on film and records “the last six seconds” of their lives.
   5. They were awarded The Navy Cross on 02/20/2009 (CBS News, L.A. Times).
2. As Christians, we may not have to physically exemplify the valor of those two men, but saints are warriors and are to have the same “warrior spirit” of not “shrinking back!”
   1. Hebrews 10:34-39: “We are not of those that shrink back to destruction…”
3. It should be said of us in summary of our lives (not just 6 seconds) that we stood our ground, used our (spiritual) weapons, and did our “duty into eternity!”
4. **Stand Firm** 
   1. The two Marines “never hesitated, stepped back, stepped aside, or even shifted their weight.”
   2. Hebrews 10:36-39
   3. Saints are to have endurance, to be able to stand firm, not “shrinking back.”
      1. In the episode related in the speech, others ran away, past the brave Marines standing their ground!
   4. James 1:2-4: Endurance will help one be “complete.”
   5. Joshua is an example (Joshua 1:7); King David was used as an example to measure King Josiah (II Kings 22:2) of one who does not “turn aside to the right or to the left.”
   6. Ephesians 6:10-13 *(Ex. 15:3: God is a Warrior! His children are Warriors!)*
      1. The armor of God is given to help the Saint (Soldier of Christ) “stand firm.”
      2. The saint is to stand against the schemes of the devil! (I Cor. 15:58: “Immovable”)
      3. Ephesians 6:13: In the moment of “evil” the saint is to be prepared to resist, “having done everything, to stand firm” (Jude 3: “Contend earnestly for the faith”).
   7. The Armor of God – Ephesians 6:14-15 (I John 5:19: Saints live behind enemy lines!)
      1. Belt of Truth – Ephesians 6:14
         * 1. This was not an ornament—it bound the other pieces together and gave the soldier freedom of movement.
           2. The center of our armor is truth – Jn. 17:17: God’s word is truth!
      2. Breastplate of Righteousness – Ephesians 6:14
5. The breastplate was used to protect the heart and vital organs from attack.
6. Our lives are to be righteous as defense against evil – I Peter 2:12
   * 1. Feet Shod – Ephesians 6:15
7. Roman soldiers wore cleats on their sandals that made it easy to grind in, and difficult to walk backwards.
8. Our footing must be supplied by the gospel of peace – Romans 10:15
   1. Saints are to be prepared for battle & “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might!”
9. **Know the Word of God**
10. The two Marines fired their weapons with accuracy in the last remaining seconds they had.
11. II Corinthians 10:3-4: Our weapons are not carnal (fleshly), but are spiritual – and powerful!
12. When opportunities open, we should be prepared and ready in the knowledge of the word!
    1. I Peter 3:15: Be ready to give defense to anyone who asks!
    2. That requires knowledge of God’s word and being ready when the moment comes.
13. Ephesians 6:16-18 *(Prayer is the buckles and straps that keep the armor of God on!)*
    1. Shield of Faith – Ephesians 6:16
       1. The Roman shield was as feared as the weapons they used, and with them they withstood great armies, and advanced the empire.
       2. We are to have a conquering faith – I John 5:4
    2. Helmet of Salvation – Ephesians 6:17
       1. No matter how armored a soldier was, without a helmet, he was vulnerable.
       2. We are to take this helmet from God—it is our salvation – Ephesians 2:8-9
    3. Sword of the Spirit – Ephesians 6:17
       1. Roman soldiers were deadly with their weapons; their swords were feared.
       2. We are to be trained with our “Sword” – II Tim. 2:15; Hebrews 4:12; Jude 3
14. We need to know the word of God and be able to use it to teach!
    1. II Timothy 4:2: “Be ready in season and out of season…”
    2. Acts 17:11; Ephesians 6:18: Study the word “daily” and pray often! (Prayer: Buckles & Straps of the armor of God. It’s what keeps it all together!)
    3. II Peter 3:18: “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.”
15. It’s not enough to be armed but must know how to use the “Sword of the Spirit!”
16. **Remain Faithful Until Death**
17. The Two Marines “did their duty into eternity” not letting any unauthorized personnel pass.
18. Revelation 2:10
    1. Jesus knew the church at Smyrna was suffering and told them it would get worse, but their duty: “Remain faithful until death.” *(Like saints of old who died and did not deny!)*
19. II Timothy 2:1-6, 24-26
    1. Paul told Timothy, “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”
    2. The two US Marines saved lives; saints are to save souls from the “snare of the devil!”
20. II Timothy 4:6-8 *(Like the saints in 1st c. who would die before denying Christ! – Mt. 10:32-33)*
    1. Paul would make the ultimate sacrifice for His Savior, and he was able to say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”
    2. He was in essence telling Timothy, “I have done my duty.”
21. Matthew 25:21, 23, 34: Jesus taught from the parable of the Talents and from the prophecy of the Judgment Day that the righteous will hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” (NKJV)
    1. Those who do “their duty into eternity” will inherit Heaven! (Revelation 21:7)
22. In our faithful walk with God we are not to turn aside, turn back, but be “faithful until death!”

### Conclusion

1. As Christians we all come from different backgrounds *(Ephesians 2; 3:4-7)* and stand together united in one mind and one purpose *(I Corinthians 1:10).*
2. We will give an account to God whether or not we stood our ground, knew His word, and remained faithful until death.
   1. We walk by faith (Romans 1:17) to be “faithful until death” and “not shrink back!”
   2. We must “stand firm” and “earnestly contend for the faith” *(Ephesians 6:13; Jude 3)*
   3. God said He is not pleased with the one who shrinks back – *Hebrews 10:38; Luke 9:62*
3. Our reward in Heaven is not perishable but an eternal reward! (I Cor. 9:25; I Pet. 1:3-4)
4. Paul was able to comfort Timothy saying he had fought the fight & had finished the course.
5. Can it be said of us? (Up to this point in our lives?)
6. In the final tally, it should be said of all saints that they lived their lives unwaveringly, not shrinking back, used their spiritual weapons and did “their duty into eternity!”
7. “We are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul!” (Hebrews 10:39)
8. If not a Christian, you need to be. May the word of God provoke you to repent & be baptized!
9. If a child of God who has stumbled and wandered off the path, be reconciled to Him by confessing your sins, repenting of them, and asking for forgiveness.
10. Whatever your requests, let them be known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!

**“The Last Six Seconds” Excerpt**

<http://thebulletproofmonk.blogspot.com/2010/12/last-six-seconds.html>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/six-seconds-of-iraq-valor-saved-dozens/>

<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/feb/21/nation/na-marines21>

Speech given by Lt. Gen. John Kelly to the Semper Fi Society in St, Louis, MO on Nov. 13th, 2010 about two Marines (who had not met before) guarding a post at the entry control point of Joint Security Station Nasser, in the Sophia section of Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq on April 22, 2008. The incident was caught on video.

“You can watch the last six seconds of their young lives.  Putting myself in their heads I supposed it took about a second for the two Marines to separately come to the same conclusion about what was going on once the truck came into their view at the far end of the alley. Exactly no time to talk it over, or call the sergeant to ask what they should do. Only enough time to take half an instant and think about what the sergeant told them to do only a few minutes before: “Let no unauthorized personnel or vehicles pass.” The two Marines had about five seconds left to live.

It took maybe another two seconds for them to present their weapons, take aim, and open up.  By this time the truck was half-way through the barriers and gaining speed the whole time.  Here, the recording shows a number of Iraqi police, some of whom had fired their AKs, now scattering like the normal and rational men they were-some running right past the Marines. They had three seconds left to live.

For about two seconds more, the recording shows the Marines' weapons firing non-stop, the truck's windshield exploding into shards of glass as their rounds take it apart and tore in to the body of the \*[driver] who is trying to get past them to kill their brothers -- American and Iraqi-bedded down in the barracks totally unaware of the fact that their lives at that moment depended entirely on two Marines standing their ground.

The recording shows the truck careening to a stop immediately in front of the two Marines. In all of the instantaneous violence (CPL. Jonathan) Yale (22 yo) and (Lance CPL. Jordan) Haerter (20 yo) never hesitated.  By all reports and by the recording, they never stepped back. They never even started to step aside. They never even shifted their weight.  With their feet spread shoulder width apart, they leaned into the danger, firing as fast as they could work their weapons. They had only one second left to live.

The truck explodes.  The camera goes blank.  Two young men go to their God.  Six seconds.  Not enough time to think about their families, their country, their flag, or about their lives or their deaths, but more than enough time for two very brave young men to do their duty into eternity.  That is the kind of people who are on watch all over the world tonight -- for you.”

 U.S. Navy Cross (Front)  U.S. Navy Cross (Reverse)