

Phil Cooke: Christians, Be Careful With Military Language on July 4th Sunday

Something we invariably witness on July 4th Sunday is video on the widescreens at some churches featuring fighter jets, soldiers and waving flags. Yes—Jesus used militaristic language in the New Testament. As the Park Forum devotional puts it: “In a time when Galilee already had a powerful and dangerous ruler (Herod Antipas), Jesus was a revolutionary. When Jesus spoke of his purpose and mission, he often used war-like language. For example, in Matthew 10, he said, ‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.’ “

But what we can't forget is that Jesus wasn't advocating a physical battle; he spoke as a warrior-king in a *spiritual* war. The battle Jesus calls us to fight is in another dimension.

And that battle against sin never stops. There is never any rest when it comes to that fight. But as Ephesians 6:12 says, “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*”

This July 4th, let's celebrate the ultimate freedom found in Jesus, and lay off the culture war rhetoric. Besides, truth be told, my greatest battles aren't with others, they're with me.