

THERE'S A WAR GOING ON

Many believers don't seem to know that to be a Christian is to engage in a warfare. The Bible is very clear about that. When Paul wrote to a young preacher named Timothy, he said, ***"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare"*** (1 Timothy 1:18). What he was saying was, "Son, you are in a battle, in warfare, and it is not going to be easy." To the same young man, Paul also wrote this, ***"Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"*** (2 Timothy 2:3). What do soldiers do? They do not spend all their time on the parade ground, no, they engage in warfare! What's more, they are expected to be tough and resilient because they must endure hardship, both in training and on the battlefield.

Many of us don't act like we're in a spiritual battle. But Paul was always conscious of this warfare. At the end of his life's journey, he said, ***"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"*** (2 Timothy 4:7). In Ephesians 6:11 he tells his readers to, ***"Put on the whole armour of God...."*** Why armour? Because we are soldiers. Why armour? Because we are in a battle. A spiritual war is raging! So, ***"Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles (strategies) of the devil."*** What we need to clearly understand is mentioned verse 12: ***"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*** This is not a battle against people. This is not a battle against mere human opposition. We are in a conflict against supernatural forces. If we listen to the terminology that Paul uses, we will notice that the opposing army has some serious and authoritative ranking officers (principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and wickedness in high places).

So what are we fighting over? First, let me say this, it's not over what we often think it is. Unless, who we "are" and what we are "involved in" is a threat to the devil's rule, these forces of evil are not that interested. Don't think the devil is preventing you from getting a new handbag or a new car, this is not his mandate. He has come to steal, kill and destroy. It's the same in any conflict, it has to do with territorial control. This battle is about who shall have the supremacy, Christ or satan. It's a struggle for the souls of men. It's a battle to keep people out of hell. It's a struggle to get people saved. It is a warfare, a conflict until the finish. And every one of us is engaged in it. Whether we like it or not!

However, the average Christian is not really a soldier. He is not really engaged in a spiritual struggle. He is not fighting anything, not standing for any cause. If we don't stand for something, we are apt to die for nothing! We must take on the cause of Jesus Christ! We are to penetrate the darkness with the light of Christianity. ***"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force"*** (Matthew 11:12). Yes, we are definitely in a warfare. ***"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds"*** (2 Corinthians 10:4). That leads me to the next truth.

We have weapons! The Lord didn't leave us without anything to go into battle with. He says we can put on the whole armour. If you closely examine the seven items of armour, you will notice that the only place we are exposed is in the small of the back. But we don't need anything there if we are facing in the right direction. If we are not running in fear, we don't ever need to worry about getting injured in the back. So remember, provided we are fully engaged in this battle, and have put on all our spiritual armour, we have the ability to be victorious. We have been given defensive and offensive weapons - to WIN!

The weapons of our warfare are not physical. They are mighty through God. Personality or talent don't have anything to do with it. The weapons of our warfare are not physical. Here is a Bible illustration of it. We read in chapter 17 of Exodus where the children of Israel were fighting against the Amalekites. They were the descendants of Amalek. Amalekites in the Bible stand for the flesh and its power. The children of Israel are gathered against the Amalekites. Moses said to Joshua, the general of the army, *"I want you to go down into the valley and fight against those Amalekites. Slay them. God has said that the Amalekites must be destroyed - men, women and children. Destroy them from the face of the earth."*

Moses, goes on to the mountaintop and he lifts his hands toward God. Notice, he has no weapon. He does not touch an Amalekite. He is not physically engaged in the conflict. He merely extends his hands toward God; and when he does, down there in the valley, Joshua and the other fighters overpower the Amalekites. However, when Moses' hands grow tired and drop down to his side (when they fall), the Amalekites begin to gain ascendancy. God says to Aaron on one side and Hur on the other, *"Hold up the hands of Moses toward Heaven, because when his hands are lifted toward God, the children of Israel win; and when they are not lifted toward God, the children of Israel lose."* The conflict was not being won by what went on in the valley but by what took place on the mountaintop. The weapons of our warfare are not physical but **spiritual**. Many of you are trying to fight a spiritual battle with carnal, fleshly, worldly weapons. You are not going to win that way. The weapons of our warfare are not physical, but mighty through God. The Lord has given us something mighty to fight with! It's amazing, astounding, and even pitiful how little the average Christian uses the weapons the Lord has given him to fight this warfare.

Note, the most effective weapon we have is the Word of God. There is absolutely nothing like it. Ephesians 6 tells us that one of our weapons is ***“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*** Can you imagine a soldier going off to fight and not having a weapon? We have a sword, and we must have it in our heart, in our life and in our mind. Yet so many of God’s soldiers do not use this weapon effectively. When the Devil came to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, three times Jesus said, *“It is written.... It is written....It is written.”* When Jesus met the devil in battle, He unsheathed His sword and fought the devil with the Word of God.

Listen! God has given you the weapon of **His Word**. Get out your Bible, open it every day, and read it for yourself. If you don’t do it, you are a soldier without a sword. *“The weapons of our warfare are not physical, but are mighty through God.”* What else has He given us? We also have the **Holy Spirit** as a weapon in this spiritual warfare. Think of the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian, you have the Spirit of God living in you. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, said: ***“What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price.”*** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). You are the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God dwells not in temples made with hands, He dwells in saved people. Those that have been washed by the blood of Jesus. Think how powerful He is!

Notice, the weapons that we have, they are **mighty**, and they are mighty through God. The vessel through which these weapons flow determines the power they possess! The Word of God says, ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”*** Observe, it is in “His might,” and not our own strength, thank God.

Again, ***“Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord of hosts”*** (Zechariah 4:6). These are not ordinary days we are living in. Our enemy is not an ordinary foe. Just ordinary human weapons will never secure the victory. We have the same powerful weapons and the same mighty God today that Moses had when he defeated the Egyptian nation. With God’s power, David slew Goliath with a slingshot and a smooth pebble from the brook. I would rather have a slingshot and God on my side, than the mighty sword of Goliath! Therefore, we need not quake in fear in the presence of the enemy. For God’s Word says, ***“In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us”*** (Romans 8:37).

Yes, we are “more than conquerors,” so no enemy can stand against the church of Jesus Christ. We have guaranteed victory! This is what I really love about our text this morning. ***“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds”*** (2 Corinthians 10:4). God is guaranteeing that if we use His weapons, we will win. They are *“mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”* Use them, and strongholds will crumble before your very eyes! What we have at our disposal right now is mighty through God. Aren’t you glad your victory is guaranteed?

All through the Bible we can see this guarantee. In Revelation 12:11 it says, ***“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”*** If we will use our spiritual weapons, God guarantees the victory. He has a legal document to prove it, and it’s written in the blood of His Son Jesus. It’s called the New Covenant (the New Promise). I don’t care what your circumstances are, let me tell you, in Jesus Christ there is victory! ***“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.”*** (2 Corinthians 10:4).

So stop trying to take on the enemy with your own weapons. You can't even overcome your own flesh without the Spirit of God's help! ***“Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord.”*** I don't care how mighty you think your own human abilities or efforts are, they're no match for any of the three enemies of your soul - the world, the flesh and the devil. Therefore remember this; whether there is a stronghold because of your relationship with the world, a stronghold caused by the lusts of your flesh, or a stronghold due to the devil's cunning devices. You have **mighty weapons** at your disposal that can pull them down. And because these weapons are spiritual (mighty through God), they operate through Him and by His Holy Spirit. Anything you do that is truly spiritual, will involve the Holy Spirit. Never forget that!

Don't bury your head in the sand and think that you can sit on the sidelines and watch the battle from a safe place. If you are saved, you are already a target. The enemy has you in his sights. So put on the whole armour of God, and pick up your shield (which extinguishes all the fiery darts of the devil), then use your sword. Remember, there is no account in the Bible where the devil ever tested Jesus again. After the Lord used the sword of the Spirit in the wilderness, the devil never came back for more! It's no different with us! When we use the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) the enemy will leave us alone.

Come on, you mighty men and women of valour. Outlast every battle and collect the spoils of war. You are more than conquerors through Christ who loves you! So start acting as though you mean business. The gates of hell will not prevail against the church - that's you and me! Hallelujah!