

Our Warfare And Its Weapons

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2 Cor. 10:4-5

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Throughout the scriptures various figures of speech are used whereby the writer gives a more forcible application of the lesson he wants to teach.

The language which the Apostle Paul uses in the text shows how powerful the gospel works in overcoming sin and all the forces of the enemy of all righteousness.

The military allusions contained in the text would naturally be understood by the Corinthians, for as we know from history, wars and victories were very familiar to them.

Let us notice three things about this text:

- The warfare.
- The weapons.
- The victories.

The warfare

Countries have been engaging in warfare’s for thousands of years.

I read somewhere that in the last 4000 years; only 268 of those years were entirely free from war in all the earth.

During the Mosaic dispensation, God led His people in wars with other nations.

The United States, even though you would hardly believe it today, was built upon Christian values, and its leaders called upon God for assistance.

History tells us that George Washington often went off by himself and prayed to God; many times with tears.

Abraham Lincoln said these words to a group of people as he was about to be inaugurated: “I go to assume a task more difficult than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of

Washington. He never would have succeeded but for the aid of divine providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same divine blessing which sustained him, and on the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support. And I hope you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive the divine assistance without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain.”

In the 1800’s, De Tocqueville of France upon a visit to the United States said: “I sought for the greatness of America in her harbors and rivers and fertile fields, and her mines and commerce. It was not there. Not until I went into the churches and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the greatness of her power. America is great because she is good; and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

We must understand that this is a moral combat.

- 2 Cor. 10:3, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.”*
- Eph. 6:12, *“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 conflict bears no resemblance to the bloody engagements of the nations of the world. It is not a physical warfare such as a battlefield strewn with the bodies of the wounded.

But the warfare in which the apostle was engaged was the conflict of truth against error, of knowledge against ignorance, of light against darkness, of Christ against Satan.

This is a necessary conflict.

It is not an optional war in which we may be engaged, if we are so inclined, from which we may be excused, if we so desire, and still be pleasing unto God.

It is necessary, urgent, and pressing; and there can be no neutrality. We must take sides with one party or the other.

- Matt. 6:24, *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”*
- Matt. 12:30, *“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”*

So, we must conquer or be conquered; we must fight or die.

This is a demanding conflict.

Every battle implies vigorous exertion, and this warfare is no exception.

We cannot for a moment relent in the fight and become tolerant toward sin, worldliness, and error.

- Heb. 12:4, “*Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*”
- Luke 13:24, “*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*”

This is a momentous struggle.

Every physical warfare has temporal and important interests at stake (oil fields, mine fields, port access, etc.).

But in this conflict there are involved eternal interests that are indescribable. These interests stretch far beyond the bounds of this world into eternity.

Hence, in this issues of this conflict, God and men, angels and devils, heaven and earth, are interested.

Therefore, how can any Christian be unconcerned or lukewarm in his attitude toward this conflict?

Rev. 3:15-16, “*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*”

The weapons

Every Christian is a soldier. As such he is armed with weapons both offensive and defensive.

Eph. 6:10-17, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*”

- Truth — soldier's girdle.
- Righteousness — his breastplate.
- Firm footing — the gospel.
- Faith — his broad shield.
- Helmet — his hope of salvation. The helmet was a cap made of thick leather or brass fitted to the head. It was used to guard the head from a blow by a sword or broadax. So the hope of salvation will defend the soul and keep it from the blows of the enemy.
- Sword — the word of God.

Heb. 4:12, *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

Jesus used this sword against Satan. Matt. 4:4-10, *"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

There is nothing that will furnish a better security when temptation comes. Psalms 119:11, *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*

These weapons are not carnal.

2 Cor. 10:4, *“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”*

Jesus never ordained that the gospel of peace should be advanced by the carnal sword. John 18:36, *“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”*

These weapons are mighty through God.

2 Cor. 10:4, *“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”*

That is, He is the author of our weapons and our power. Eph. 3:20, *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”*

The victories of this warfare

- 2 Cor. 10:5, *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”*
- 2 Cor. 10:5 (NIV), *“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

Demolishing the strongholds of reason or argument.

A stronghold is a fortress or strong fortification. In military terms the stronghold is used to denote the various obstacles which hinder the advancement of the enemy.

Here, the Christian warfare can defeat, or pull down, the strongholds of false reason or argument by the truth of God.

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God...”

Reference here is made to the various systems of philosophy which confuse men and hide from view the knowledge of God.

There are yet in the world many *“high things”* which must be cast down in order for the gospel to triumph.

“... and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

The idea suggested is that when all the strongholds of error shall have been broken down, then shall the ultimate purpose of Christ

be accomplished in its complete victory over sin and error, like taking the inhabitants of a captured city.

Here we see that even the emotions, feelings, and thoughts of the heart are come under the control of Christ, as a captive is led by a victor.

Some practical lessons drawn from this study

That Christianity is not a system of quietism and pacifism.

It is a system of intense and determined combat against evil and error.

If we relent in the struggle, if we become inactive, our armor will be useless and our weapons will rust.

So, if you are taking your ease instead of waging this war, if you are on terms of peace with Satan, your profession of faith and fidelity in Christ is but in vain.

Neutrality is not an option. Matt. 12:30, *“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”*

Our Christianity is not only defensive, but it is also aggressively offensive.

We must pursue the enemy; we must follow him up, right into his stronghold.

One reason the gospel has not made more progress in the world is that we have contented ourselves with just being defensive.

Too many are at ease instead of planning modes of attack and engaging in aggressive warfare.

The language of the text suggests this.

The strongholds are not only attacked, but pulled down.

So, let us fight with the certainty of success, for the cause of truth must prevail.

Conclusion

Let the soldiers of Christ arise and gird on the swords, and let them go forth to battle, clad with the whole armor of God.

If you are not a soldier of the cross, why not enlist today in the army of the Lord? The following are the steps how you can enlist in His army:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn’t sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”
- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Acts 11:18, *“... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”* If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life,

or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, “*But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said “*it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.*” We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “for the remission of sins”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been*

planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not yet become a member of Christ's army, won't you consider it today?

Or, if you have been a soldier in the past, but you have become a traitor to His cause, will you not today renew your allegiance to the King of kings by rededicating your life to His cause?

