

THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE

Eph.6:10-18

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Christians are soldiers of Jesus Christ. See 2Tim.2:1-4.
2. As such all of us have a battle to be fought. 2Tim.4:6-8.
3. Though, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, we must fight a battle; and though our warfare is not a worldly one, and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, fleshly or worldly, they are divinely potent enabling us to demolish the strongholds of human theories. See 2Cor.10:3-6.
4. Out text deals with our warfare as Christians:
 - a. Admonishing us to “be strong in the Lord,” V.10a.
 - b. Revealing to us how to be strong in the Lord: “Put on the whole armor of God,” Vv.11a,13a.
 - c. Revealing to us its purpose, Vv.11b,13b.
 - d. Reminding us who is the enemy in the conflict and of he enemies’ devices, schemes, methods, and stratagems (tricks, snares), Vv.11,12,16.
 - e. Revealing to us the separate parts of the whole armor of God, Vv.14-17.
 - f. And finally reminding us of the place and function of prayer as it relates to our warfare, V.18.
5. As we shall see, among other things, this lesson will emphasize and establish the importance and absolute necessity of individual Bible study and spiritual growth.
6. We shall develop our text by declaring that it teaches:--

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE CAN'T BE FOUGHT SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT DIVINE HELP, INDICATED BY THE ADMONITION OF V.10.

1. Thus far in this Epistle the Apostle Paul has delighted greatly in the sublime constitution of the faith of Jesus Christ and the glorious destiny of the church of which Jesus Christ is the head and Savior.

2. Now he deals with the formidable foes with which those of the faith of Christ will have to contend in their spiritual warfare.
3. Seeing the evil forces gathering and hearing the clash of arms among the approaching enemies, he solemnly warns believers, the soldiers in the Lord's army, that unaided by divine help they will be powerless in the strife and must suffer defeat.
4. He leaves no doubt that they are secure and will be victorious in the battle only if they make the strength of God their own.
5. In the army of the Lord and the Christian's warfare, the strength of each and every saint or soldier lies in the Lord of hosts. God can overcome his enemies without their hands; but they cannot even defend themselves without his arm.
6. For man is impotent in spiritual warfare without the strength of God. Power to contend with the spiritual foes must come from God and God's means of doing battle. Cf. 1Pet.5:6-10.

B. THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE INVOLVES A FIERCE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT WITH THE POWERS OF EVIL, Vv.11-12,16.

1. According to V.12 our conflict is not against flesh and blood, but with unseen spiritual enemies, where he brings out by contrast, or in bold relief, the one to the other, the terrible foes we are to encounter in the conflict.
 - a. As to their position, they are not subalterns (one who holds a subordinate or inferior position), but foes of mighty rank, the nobility and chieftains of the spirit world: supramundane (supernatural) beings (evil angels) who exercise rule.
 - (1) Evil angels and demons holding dominion entrusted to them in the order of things, V.12c. (Mt.25:41; Rom.8:38; 1Cor.15:24; Eph.1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col.1:16; 2:10,15).
 - b. As to their office. Their domain is "the darkness of this world," in which they exercise great authority or influence, V.12b.
 - c. As to their essence, they are spiritual beings; we are dealing with spiritual beings, not human beings as the enemies in this warfare.

- d. As to their character. They are evil, involved with spiritual wickedness in high places.
2. Our conflict is with unseen spiritual enemies led by an astute and subtle commander, that of the devil himself, Vv.11,16.
 - a. Jesus identifies the devil as “a murderer from the beginning,” as “a liar, and the father of it,” as one in whom “there is no truth,” Jno.8:44.
 - b. The Bible identifies him as “the god of this world” (2Cor.4:4) as “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph.2:2) as “the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (Rev.12:9).
 - c. Satan’s evil world of darkness is ruled with a settled policy of spiritual destruction, and his warfare is carried on with a system of wicked strategy that takes advantage of every opening for attack.
 - d. The manifold combinations of error, the various arts of seduction and temptation, the ten thousand forms of the deceit of unrighteousness, constitute “the wiles of the devil.” Cf. 2Cor.11:12-15; Rev.2:1,2.

C. THE CHRISTIAN’S WARFARE IS VICTORIOUS ONLY AS HE ARMS HIMSELF WITH THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, Vv.11,13,16.

1. We, each Christian, each soldier, must “put on the WHOLE armor of God,” Vv.11a,13a:
 - a. “That he may BE ABLE to stand against the wiles (devices, schemes, methods, stratagems, tricks, snares) of the devil,” V.11b.
 - b. “That he may BE ABLE to withstand in the evil day,” V.13b.
 - c. “Wherewith (or by this) ye shall BE ABLE quench all the fiery darts of the wicked One,” V.16a.
 - d. In each of these the expression “be able” is the key phrase! The necessary implication is that without putting on the whole armor of God one cannot be victorious over the devil.
2. In Vv.11,13,16, the armor we must put on is identified:

- a. As the armor of God, the divine armor. It is “of God” because he provides or makes each individual part of it possible.
 - b. As to its purpose, it’s an armor for offence as well as defense.
 - c. As to its necessity. For without it we can’t be victorious in the warfare we must wage, like it or not! The battle is always on going!
3. Only by this means is the saint, the Christian, the soldier of the Lord prepared and protected! It’s the promise of God that by doing this he is prepared and protected!

D. THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD THAT ENABLES US TO BE STRONG IN THE LORD IS IDENTIFIED IN ITS SEPARATE PARTS, Vv.14-17.

1. “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with TRUTH,” V.14a
 - a. Thayer, 26, ALETHEIA, “subjectively; truth as a personal excellence; that candor of mind which is free from affectation, pretence, simulation, falsehood, deceit: Jno.8:44; sincerity of mind and integrity of character, or a mode of life in harmony with divine truth: 1Cor.5:8; 13:6; Eph.4:21; 5:9; 6:14.
 - b. Vines, IV, 159, “subjectively, truthfulness, truth, not merely verbal, but sincerity and integrity of character.”
 - c. “Truth” is the girdle to strengthen us. Honesty and truthfulness of character.
 - d. We must in all things act according to truth or what is truth; to what is true and sincere.
 - e. This implies knowledge of truth, the yielding up of ourselves to truth and sincerity so as to embody it.
2. “And having on the breastplate of righteousness,” V.14b.
 - a. It denotes a breastplate or corselet, consisting of two parts and protecting the body on both sides, from the neck to the middle.
 - b. It is here used metaphorically of righteousness.
 - c. Right action; the character or quality of being right or just; it was formerly spelled “rightwiseness,” which clearly expresses the meaning.

- d. In the broad sense, the state of him who is such as he ought to be; the condition acceptable to God...integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting.”
- 3. “And your feet shod with the preparation of *the gospel of peace*,” V.15.
 - a. The gospel of peace is the message to be proclaimed, Rom. 10:15; Jas.3:17,18; Mt.5:9.
 - b. When believed and obeyed it is a gospel that brings:
 - (1) Peace to both Jew and Gentile.
 - (2) Peace with God that abides with you.
 - (3) The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and that keeps (guards) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
 - c. In the gospel peace is proclaimed; its grounds are unfolded; it is conveyed.
 - d. However, in proclaiming the gospel of peace, it must never be “peace at any price.” Cf. Rom.12:18; Gal.1:6-10; Heb.12:14.
- 4. “Above all things taking *the shield of faith*,” V.16a.
 - a. See Heb.11:1,6.
 - b. Take note of what the O.T. worthies accomplished by faith, Heb.11:7-10,17,21-24,27,30-32.
 - c. By faith we too can gain the victory and overcome the world, 1Jno.5:4,5.
- 5. “And take *the helmet of salvation*,” V.17a.
 - a. Cf. 1Th.5:8; Tit.1:2; Heb.6:9-20; Rom.8:24,25; 1Jno.2:24,25.
- 6. “And *the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God*,” V.17b.
 - a. While the other parts of the armor or the Christian’s weaponry may be classified as defensive in nature; this one is both defensive and offensive in nature!
 - b. The word of God is a sword, because it pierces like a sword into the heart, Heb.4:12; because it pierces through all disguises of error ; because it lays bare the “wiles” of the devil.
 - c. It was wielded by Jesus Christ himself in his great temptation when he said: “It is written.”

- d. It is still the Christian's only weapon of offense. Whether the temptation is to Atheism, to impiety, to despair, to unbelief, to covetousness, to pride, to hatred, to worldliness, to legend, "It is written," stands clearly stamped on the handle of this sword!
- e. It is the sword of the Spirit, because he is its revealer.
- f. But the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, is of no use till it is unsheathed and used as the Lord and his apostles used it.
- g. And it can't be used unless we know what it is, which we can't know unless we have studied it for ourselves! We must be diligent students of the word! Cf. 2Tim.2:15.

E. FINALLY, ALL IS VAIN WITHOUT PRAYING ALWAYS WITH PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION AND WATCHING WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE, V.18.

- 1. We are not to regard prayer as a seventh weapon, but rather as exhibiting the spirit in which the whole armor of God is to be assumed and the warfare carried on.
- 2. Note this about our prayer-life in connection with our warfare:
 - a. As to the time: "Always"
 - (1) "Without ceasing," or unceasingly, 1Th.5:17.
 - (2) The frequent practice of prayer is the idea.
 - (3) Regularly and constantly.
 - b. As to the manner and matter of it: "With all prayer and supplication."
 - (1) There are thanksgivings to be rendered.
 - (2) There are confessions to be made.
 - (3) There are petitions to be offered.
 - (4) There are intercessions to be presented.
 - (5) There is praise of God to be expressed.
 - c. As to its spirituality: "in the spirit" – it is not be prayer of form merely, but from the heart filled with heavenward longings and aspirations.
 - d. As to its intercession: "watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for the saints," Cf. V.19.

III. CONCLUSION

1. The Christian's life involves a conflict between good and evil.
 - a. God and his Cause is always on the side of good.
 - b. The devil and his cause is always on the side of evil.
 - c. The Christian as a warrior in the conflict must fight with weapons divinely provided.
 - d. When and if he does so, he is assured of the victory. Cf. 1Jno.5:4,5; Eph.6:10-18.
2. But how do we are ourselves? How do we put on the whole armor of God?
 - a. By faith in hearing, believing and obeying the word of God, in our initial obedience of the gospel And by faith in continued obedience to the word of God; by growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord.
 - b. Without personal knowledge of God's written word it's impossible to put on the whole armor of God and be strong in the Lord.
 - c. Without personal Bible study to gain this bible knowledge one cannot war this warfare; cannot put on the whole armor of God; cannot use the separate parts of the whole armor of God; cannot "withstand in the evil day," cannot "quench...the fiery darts of the wicked One," nor "stand against the wiles of the devil."
3. Consider 1Pet.3:15; also 2Tim.2:15.
4. What further motive could one have for personal bible study?
5. In view of this, why would any professed Christian even think about ignoring and neglecting the edification work of the local church carried on by our Bible study program/
6. Think about what the Hebrew writer says to the Hebrew Christians in Heb.5:11-14; 2:1-3.