

2/3/13

The Believer And Warfare

2Cor. 10:1-6

Paul now turns to give specific attention to the false teachers that had infiltrated and were undermining the ministry of Paul by attacking his apostleship.

1. Paul defended his ministry, dealing with Christian living. 2Cor. 1-7
2. Paul defended his mission offering, dealing with Christian giving. 2Cor. 8-9
3. Paul defends his apostolic authority, dealing with Christian discerning. 2Cor. 10-13

Like the Corinthians, if each of us do not see with the eyes of the Spirit, we will be taken in by false teachers who corrupt the word of God.

Paul had been accused of:

1. Coming to them in fleshly wisdom. 2Cor. 1:12
2. Vacillating in his words and plans. 2Cor. 1:17
3. Having no letters of commendation. 2Cor. 3:1
4. Having no integrity and wrong motives. 2Cor. 5:11
5. Interested in gain. 2Cor. 8:20, 11:8-9
6. Being authoritative at a distance by letter, but in presence not confident and fearful. 2Cor. 10:10
7. His apostleship un-genuine and false. 2Cor. 11:5

If you are a Christian, you are born into warfare, so don't be surprised when your authority is attacked if not altogether challenged and slandered.

This was a constant occurrence with Jesus, as He was opposed by the religious leaders of His day due to envy and jealousy, denying His authority in what He did or taught, declaring Him to be false.

There are many clear warnings in Scripture about those who not only corrupt God's word, but desire to lord over the people of God.

1. The parable of the Sower speaks of the wheat and tares, the leaven in the meal and the birds that lodge in the tree. Matt. 13
2. The majority of the epistles are polemic in nature, as is Second Corinthians.
3. Jude describes them as spots, clouds without water, trees without fruit, wandering stars.
4. Second Peter tells us they are in the church and will have many followers through deceptive words and the twisting of the Scriptures.

Jesus gave a stern warning to all who would stumble little children who believe in Jesus, "Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" Matt. 18:7

* The apostle Paul now turns to direct his attention to these false apostles indirectly, as he addressed himself to the Corinthians.

The apostle Paul declared his apostolic authority for spiritual warfare, characterized by three things: 2Cor. 10:1-6

- I. The plead regarding the warfare. vs. 1-2
- II. The perspective regarding the weapons of warfare. vs. 3-5
- III. The practice regarding order after warfare. vs. 6

I. The plead in regarding the warfare. vs. 1-2

A. The apostle Paul used his authority after the example of His Master. vs. 1a-c

- 1. Paul pleaded with the Corinthians in view of the deception by the Judaizers.
 - * “Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you.”
 - a. The person of Paul is emphatic in the Greek, “myself, I Paul.”
 - b. The apostle presents himself as pleading “parakaleo”, indicates to call to one’s side to reason with them as one who is interested for their good.
- 2. Paul pleaded with them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. vs. 1c
 - * “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”
 - a. The word meekness “praotes” has the idea of humility, the inward virtue of the new man “in Christ”.

1) If you hyphenate the word, it speak for itself, “me-ek”.

2) The word indicates power under control.

b. The word gentleness “epieikeia” means mildness or suitableness, the outward expression of the inner virtue and character.

1) The visible conduct is a reflection of the new nature.

2) The reality of the genuine man.

c. The two-fold virtue was evidence of the life of Christ in Paul!

1) Jesus said, “I am meek and lowly.” Matt. 11:28

2) “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.” Matt. 5:5

3. Paul related these virtues to his present relationship to them. vs. 1d-e

* “who in presence *am* lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.”

a. The apostle stated that in presence he was lowly among them.

1) The word lowly “tapeinos”, means to be low to the ground referring to the low degree or his humility among them, not puffed up.

2) Lowly complements meekness.

b. The apostle stated that in absence he was bold towards them.

- 1) The word bold “tharrheo”, means to be of good courage or confident.
 - 2) In context refers to confidence in his authority to confront the Corinthians about their sin.
- c. The false teachers took the conduct of Paul towards the Corinthians and used it against him.
- 1) They accused him of acting in a false way in physical presence, with no real confident authority.
 - 2) They accused him of being bold or confident in his authority only when absent from them, trying to rule over them.
 - 3) This portrayed the conduct of Paul, as a coward, not a confident apostle of Jesus and the gospel.
- B.** The apostle Paul did not want to use his authority to confront the Corinthians the way he was going to confront the false apostles. vs. 2
1. Paul stated to the Corinthians that he did not want to exercise his apostolic authority towards them the next time he came to them. vs. 2a
 - * “But I beg *you* that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence.”

- a. The plead of Paul again was due to the fact that he loved them and it would pained him much, even as it did when he wrote First Corinthians. 2Cor. 2:3-4
- 1) The word but “de” stands in sharp contrast to the previous verse, he does not want to come with a rode.
 - 2) The word beg “deonai”, has the idea of supplications to those he loved, rather than compelling them.
 - 3) The word confidence “pepoithesis”, means reliable assurance by his commissioned ministry authority.
 - 4) The word bold “tharrheo”, means to be of good courage or confident in apostolic authority to confront and discipline, as verse one.
 - 5) He did not want to exercise his apostolic authority against those unrepentant Corinthians, as he planned to do with the false Jewish teachers, false apostles. 1Cor. 4:18, 8:7, 15:12, 2Cor. 3:1, 12:20
- b. Paul was looking forward to seeing their openness of heart toward himself and his companions, as he expressed.

- 1) “O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.” 2Cor. 6:11
 - 2) “Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one.” 2Cor. 7:2
2. Paul stated he planned to exercise his apostolic authority towards some before the whole congregation. vs. 2a
- * “by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.”
- a. The reference to some “tis” is to those Judaizers who oppose Paul at Corinth.
 - 1) This was his intent “logizomai”, which means to reckon with a determined purpose.
 - 2) His courageous reliable authority would be against the false teachers.
 - 3) He would be bold “tolmao”, against them, which means not to dread or shun through fear, but rather dare to confront by his apostolic authority.
 - 2) The word confidence “pepoithesis”, means reliable assurance of his commissioned ministry authority.

- b. Paul identified the “some” by their opinion of him and his companions. vs. 2b
 - 1) These individuals had concluded that Paul, as well as those with him were going about the business of ministry according to the flesh.

* “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.” 2Cor. 1:12
 - 2) The word flesh “sarx” is used in different ways in the New Testament.
 - a) To identify the body of flesh.
 - b) To identify the weakness natural ability of man.
 - c) To identify the corrupt nature.

Illustration

Stern discipline is always the last resort of any father, he would much rather see his child learn through obedience!

* Paul had asked whether he should come to them with a rod or in love and meekness. 1Cor. 4:21

Application

1. Meekness is a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, agape love, that each of us as Christians can manifest. Gal. 5:23
2. Meekness does not mean that we never confront, but that we confront in the right attitude to restore in the spirit of meekness in the way we would like to be confronted. Gal. 6:1
3. The believer is to be known for a meek and gentle spirit throughout the Scriptures.
 - a. The believer is begged to walk in meekness. Eph. 4:2
 - b. We are told to put on as the elect of God meekness. Col. 3:12
 - c. We are to follow meekness. 1Tim. 6:11
 - d. We are to instruct in meekness those who oppose themselves. 2Tim. 2:25
 - e. We are to show meekness to all men. Tit. 3:2

This was Paul's plead regarding warfare!

II. The perspective regarding the weapons of warfare. vs. 3-5

- A. The apostle Paul pointed out the distinction between living in the flesh and warring according to the flesh. vs. 3
 - * "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh."
1. Paul did not deny his humanness, as well as the others who minister with him by

the phrase, "for though we walk in the flesh". vs. 3a

- a. Each of them possessed a physical body of flesh and blood.
 - b. Each of them had sin nature capable of manifesting itself through their human body.
 - c. Each of them hungered, tired, aged and one day die physically.
2. Paul said even though he was as human as any other person, he and the others did not war according to the flesh. vs. 3b
 - a. The military metaphor is a favorite one of Paul.
 - 1) "Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air." 1Cor. 9:26c
 - 2) "Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?" 2Cor. 2:14-16
 - 3) The entire armor of God is listed. Eph. 6:10-17

- b. In other words even though they were human as any other person, they were not depending on nor resorting to their sinful nature or natural abilities to combat the spiritual opposition at Corinth or any other place.
 - 1) The word war “strateuomai”, means to make a military expedition, leading soldiers to war.
 - 2) There always being a potential of insubordination from within the ranks, as well as infiltration of the enemy from without.
- c. Paul distinguished himself and those who had worked with him at Corinth from the Judaizers.
 - 1) Paul and his fellow-workers were apostle of Jesus Christ and the churches. 2Cor. 1:1, 8:23
 - 2) The Judaizers were false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 2Cor. 11:13
 - 3) These false apostles were preaching a different Jesus. 2Cor. 11:4a
 - 4) In affect Paul denied the accusations that he was ineffective in his ministry.

- B. The apostle Paul pointed out the identity of his weapons of warfare. vs. 4
 - * “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God.”
 - 1. Paul’s weapons are not carnal. (Negative)
 - a. The word warfare “strateia”, again means an expedition or campaign of military service.
 - 1) Paul likened his contentions and difficulties that oppose him at Corinth, as warfare to be dealt with as part of his duties of his apostolic commission to contend for the faith.
 - 2) The origin of warfare is spiritual, though it is manifested in the physical realm!
 - b. The word carnal “sarkikos”, means dominated by the natural sinful nature of man.
 - 1) Paul called the Corinthians carnal “sarkikos”, in his first letter, due to the fact that they were walking as natural men despite of having been born again. 1Cor. 3:1, 3
 - 2) Paul already told them earlier that they did not conduct themselves in this world in fleshly “sarkikos”, wisdom but the grace of God. 2Cor. 1:12

2. Paul's weapons are mighty in God.
(Positive)
- a. The weapons are effective, due to the fact that the war campaign is God's and He provides the weapons to equip his soldiers.
 - 1) The Lord causing them to triumph always when He leads. 2Cor. 2:14
 - 2) Their sufficiency was of God. 2Cor. 3:5
 - 3) They did not loose heart. 2Cor. 4:1, 16
 - 4) The treasure in the earthen vessel was for the excellence and power of God not of themselves. 2Cor. 4:7
 - 5) God's strength is made perfect in weakness. 2Cor. 12:9
 - b. The weapons are spiritual to accompany the spiritual warfare.
 - 1) Mighty "dunatos", means powerful to accomplish victory.
 - 2) The divine weapons are accompanied with the divine power of God.

- C. The apostle Paul pointed out the purposeful efficiency of his weapons of warfare. vs. 4-5
* "for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of

- God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."
1. Paul stated, "For pulling down strongholds." vs. 4
 - a. The phrase pulling down "kathairesis", mans destruction or demolition, with the idea of clearing the obstacle.
 - 1) It is found three times in the New Testament. 2Cor. 10:8; 13:10
 - 2) This is the power of he gospel through the Holy Spirit and gifts.
 - b. The word strongholds "ochuroma" is derived from the meaning to fortify, through the idea of holding safely.
 - 1) These strongholds are describing the fortress like beliefs that men are making their defense and objections against the gospel of Christ, not Paul.
 - a) The word strongholds is in the plurals, these strongholds are listed for us in the next verse. vs. 5
 - b) This is the only time the word appears in the New Testament.
 - 2) The power of God through the gospel is able to demolish these strongholds or prisons in the minds of man, keeping them from having the ability to reason or see the deception and be set free.

2. Paul stated these fortresses consist of arguments. vs. 5
 - a. These arguments “logismos”, are the reasonings or thoughts that they are hostile to the Christian faith.
 - 1) Denying God.
 - 2) Denying the need of salvation, etc.
 - b. The battle plan is to always demolish these thoughts that come against the authority of the gospel.
 - 1) The phrase casting down “kathaireo”, means to take down, as the superior force, clearing the obstacle.
 - 2) The same root as “pulling down” in verse four.
 - 3) The tense is a participle present active, to be ongoing, at all times, constantly.
 - b. The weapons are mighty in God able to remove and throw down from their place of power.
 - 1) The philosophies that oppose the gospel.
 - 2) The false logics that oppose the gospel.
3. Paul stated these fortresses consist of, “every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.”
 - a. The phrase high thing “hupsoma” refers to an elevated structure, barrier.

- 1) That which is in opposition to the knowledge “gnosis”, of God signifies the general understanding of the gospel.
- 2) The word casting down “kathaireo”, also applies to these, meaning to take down, as the superior force, the same root as “pulling down” in verse four.
- b. The reference is to those world views that stand as pillars and forts of thought and schools of learning that exalt themselves above the message of the gospel, which God will wreck and defeat through the gospel.
 - 1) Notice Paul qualified these high things by the word, every “pas”, each and any.
 - 2) There is no concept of thought, learning or philosophy that can stand against the weapons of God.
 - 3) The military metaphor is that of a superior and triumphant siege in the entire passage.
4. Paul stated these fortresses consist in, “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”
 - a. The mission is to confront and expose false and erroneous ideas about God or the gospel. vs. 5a

- 1) Every thought “noema”, means mental perception or evil purpose.
 - 2) The word appears five times in the letter. 2Cor. 2:11; 3:14; 4:4; 10:5; 11:3
 - 3) The confrontation is for protection of the believer and the gospel.
- b. The goal is to free them from their deception and obey Christ. vs. 5b
- 1) The result being one of being taken prisoner, captivity “aichmalotizo”, means to lead away captive, literally bring into captivity.
 - 2) Another participle present active, leading captive, always and continuously each and every thought or idea that would oppose or attempt to contradict the authority of the gospel, mine or others.
 - 3) And being the instrument for the Holy Spirit to convict the unbeliever and agree with God that they are sinners in need of repentance, trusting the atoning work of Christ for the righteous justification. 2Cor. 5:21
 - 4) The word obedience “hupakoe”, compliance and submission to the word of God.

Illustration

Our spiritual weapons for the warfare are much like the modern day weapons for night vision that allows them to see the enemy in the night!

Application

1. The word of God is an essential weapon in the warfare. Heb. 4:12
* “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and **sharper** than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
2. The Holy Spirit is another essential.
* “Not by **might** nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.” Zach. 4:6c-e
3. The weapon of Prayer is another. Eph. 6:18
* “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”
4. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood...Eph. 6:12
* The entire armor is given to us. Eph. 6:10-17
5. Paul exhorted Timothy to be a good soldier.
 - a. “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, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and

Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” 1Tim. 1:18-20

- b. “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” 2Tim. 2:3-4

6. Do not be blind to the spiritual attacks on your life, family and marriage, as if they are not spiritual.

* “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring **lion**, seeking whom he may devour.” 1Pet. 5:8

This was Paul’s perspective regarding the weapons of warfare!

III. The practice regarding order after the warfare. vs. 6

A. The apostle Paul was ever ready to implement spiritual discipline to the false infiltrators. vs. 6

* “and being ready to punish all disobedience.”

1. Paul was a committed faithful field martial having breeched the wall of the fortress and now ready to put down the last of any and every rebellion.

a. His settled conviction is stated by the phrase being ready.

- 1) The word ready “hetoimos”, means to be willing and prepared to act as he should.
- 2) Realizing the danger of the enemy, the remaining false teachers.

b. The word punish “ekdikeo”, means to vindicate one’s spirit and do what is just and right by implementing consequences for the wrong actions, not personal vengeance.

- 1) Literally, “having to avenge”.
- 2) Another participle present active, ongoing and continuously.
- 3) The word is used for God avenging the blood of his servants shed by the Great Harlot. Rev. 19:2

2. Paul was not going to be a respecter of persons.

a. He indicated the unreserved spiritual discipline by the phrase “all disobedience”.

- 1) The word disobedience “parakoe”, means a hearing amiss.
- 2) The implication is clear “para” along side what they have heard, but not responding, these false apostles were unwilling to hear.

b. He qualified the discipline, “all”.

- 1) The word all “pas”, is any, every false teachers, this is the context.
 - 2) Those opposing Christ by their disobedience.
- c. He was going to deal with the rebels that refused to surrender in this warfare.
- 1) Taking the needed measures to quench and expel all enemies threatening the victorious conquest.
 - 2) Paul could not and would not allowed any of the false teachers to continue in the rebellion, against the gospel and his apostolic authority and ministry.
 - 3) Paul would deal severely with them and put a stop to them.
- d. The severity of the actions of Paul was due to the severe accusation and deception of the false teachers.
- 1) That Paul was coming to them in fleshly wisdom. 2Cor. 1:12
 - 2) That Paul was vacillating in his word. 2Cor. 1:17
 - 3) That Paul had no letters of commendation. 2Cor. 3:1
 - 4) That Paul was had no integrity and wrong motives. 2Cor. 5:11
 - 5) That Paul was interested in gain. 2Cor. 8:20, 11:8-9

- 6) That Paul was being authoritative at a distance by letter, but in presence was fearful. 2Cor. 10:10
 - 7) That Paul’s apostleship was not genuine, but false. 2Cor. 11:5
- B.** The apostle was waiting for the rest of the Corinthians to fulfill their repentant obedience. vs. 6
- * “when your obedience is fulfilled.”
1. Paul was hoping for the unrepentant Corinthians to self discipline themselves.
 - a. The word obedience “hupakoe”, means compliance and submission.
 - b. The prefix “hupo” means under what one hears, being one with it, as opposed to being “para” along side.
 2. Paul was hoping for the evidence of their maturity in Christ.
 - a. He always wanted the believers to correct the wrong in the church.
 - b. He wanted the church to discern and resolved the internal issues.
 - c. He wanted the Corinthians to be faithful in warfare.
 - d. Once the obedience of the remaining Corinthians was accomplished, the church would be back on track and healthy in Christ.

Illustration

Like the field martial of the Babylonian army, once the walls of Jerusalem were breached, he went through the city and eliminated every hostile resistance left!

Application

1. The wisdom of man will oppose God's word.
 - a. "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." 1Cor. 1:21
 - b. "However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 1Cor. 2:6-8
2. The philosophies of man will want to replace the truth of God's word.
 - a. "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." Col. 2:8
 - b. "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in

Him, who is the head of all principality and power." Col. 2:9-10

3. The religions of man are passed off as the word of God, listen to the words of Jesus.
 - a. "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with *their* lips, But their heart is far from Me." Matt. 15:8
 - b. "And in vain they worship Me, Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. 15:9
4. The changing of God's truth is the same old lie repeated throughout history.
 - a. Satan said to Eve, "You will not surely die." Gen. 3:4
 - b. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." Gen. 11:4
 - c. "For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened." Rom. 1:20-21

This was Paul's practice regarding order after the warfare!

Conclusion

The apostle Paul declared his apostolic authority for spiritual warfare, characterized by:

- I.** The plead regarding the warfare!
- II.** The perspective regarding the weapons of warfare!
- III.** The practice regarding order after warfare!