

Fight with the Sword! 1

Words Matter

(preached 9/12/21)

Please turn to *Hebrews 4:12*.

ARMOR OF GOD. In Ephesians chapter 6, the Apostle Paul famously told the church at Ephesus about the full armor of God and the Sword of the Spirit, urging them to wield both declaring THAT time to be evil days.

MODERN DAYS EVIL. If those days were considered evil, then the ones we're living in now most certainly are! As we get ever closer to the revealing and full manifestation of the Beast and his tyrannical system, the ***Church is going to need to FIGHT like we never have before***...even in the days of Jesus and the Apostles!

BIG LIE. It's time for the Church to stop cowering, constantly wondering what other people will think if we speak God's truth! We've believed a big lie, especially Pastors. We've been told for decades now to remain neutral and silent when it came to social and political issues. That church and state need to be SO separate that churches can no longer take positions or voice opinions.

CHURCH IS CONSCIENCE OF STATE. Yet MLK Jr. once said "the church is called to be the conscience of the state" and I agree completely. Jesus declared both Himself and His Church to be the Light of the world meant to be shining from a hilltop! We cannot do that if we sit down and shut up.

CALL OUT EVIL. If we see evil taking place in the state AND in society, we must not only call it out, but ***then speak God's Word and show what righteousness is***. We must be prepared to take whatever negative consequences come from the same, whether community ridicule and rejection to members of our family becoming offended.

PARTISAN? Am I being a political partisan? I am if I speak the doctrine from the platform of a political party or liberal/conservative thought. If I do so, I'm only one more voice among many engaging in a fight on a completely human level.

**I'M not BEING partisan WHEN I SPEAK FROM a BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW, HOWEVER.**

When I'm being inspired by the Holy Spirit, Who will always use my tongue to read from the Scriptures or at least refer to them, then my voice in being used in the way God intended.

FRUSTRATION. MEME. I've seen frustration growing about events taking place in our country and in the world. There's a meme floating around that says: "the days are coming when good people will have to do bad things" and I assume that mean take up physical arms against oppression. Indeed, I've even seen the saints of God murmuring like this, resulting in the increase of sales of guns and ammo.

REVOLUTION. Don't misunderstand: I still look with admiration upon our Founding Fathers and the common folk who tool up guns and bayonets against the British and gained our freedom...**yet is that the way God is calling upon the Church to fight in the 2020's? Or is there another way?**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (AMP)

³ For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh *and* using mere human weapons.

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow *and* destruction of strongholds,

⁵ [Inasmuch as we] refute arguments *and* theories *and* reasonings and every proud *and* lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought *and* purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One),

TIME FOR WAR. Before I begin expositing these verses, I acknowledge there are times when we must wage physical war and I already cited one example: the American Revolution. I'm not a pacifist, I'm pro-2nd Amendment, and cannot wait until the Revelation 19 battle where I plan to get good and bloody! As a matter of fact, I'm seeing it as a competition with the rest of you that I will kill more of the Antichrist's soldiers than you!

WEAPONS SPIRITUAL. For now, however, the weapons God has given the church isn't a pistol or AR-15, it's one that exists in the spirit. I'll reveal what that weapon is in a moment. For now let's start with verse 4:

Verse 4: This spiritual weapon is mighty. American Christians don't always like hearing that some of our efforts and warfare is done in the spirit because from the beginning we've been people of ACTION...physical action.

PRAYER VS. VOLUNTEER. Call for a church wide prayer group and only a few people will show, but ask for volunteers to go and DO something such as disaster relief, and the result is much better. Why? ***We like the result of our efforts to be something we can see, with the physical eye.*** Clean up someone's yard, give away food, donate items...these are things we can witness in the here and now having a positive effect.

REQUIRES FAITH. Prayer and spiritual warfare, however, take something else called FAITH. Faith contains the substance of things we cannot touch and the evidence of things we can't see.

As Christians we must train ourselves to be people of faith as much as that of physical works.

SPIRITUAL FIGHTING. The type of fighting God has called us to is, first and foremost, spiritual.

This warfare—OUR warfare—effects both the Heavens and earth.

MIGHTY WEAPON. The weapon God has given us is MIGHTY and the translation of that word means “possible, able, strong, power, mighty man” and denotes the ability to accomplish...to win the fight.

Still on verse 4, the weapon is mighty **THROUGH GOD**. In the various RPG's I've played over the years, the main character is normally commissioned by a powerful being to slay the dragon. The hero is presented with a sword that said being has blessed and empowered with supernatural abilities, enabling a regular person to kill even the king of all monsters.

God has done this for us. The weapon we've received directly from Him pulls down strongholds, which are spiritual castles. This weapon destroys counter arguments and opinions from others that oppose the truth (and not us). It even takes our own thoughts captives—said thoughts being doubts and confusion—bringing them to the obedience of Jesus Himself. What is this weapon? Now we come to Hebrews 4:12.

CANNOT MAKE THIS PERSONAL. We are soldiers of the truth, fighting for Christ...so that battle isn't about us. We're part of a massive end times army that's been equipped and commissioned by Jesus Himself. The opposing army isn't looking at us as individuals, but as the whole body of Christ that Paul talks about in Corinthians. Thus we cannot make this personal. When we choose to obey God and do battle with God's Word as our weapon, it's not US being attacked...it's Jesus. They hated Him first before they hated us. They hate us because we are one with Him. If we make it about us, we take Jesus out of the picture and exalt ourselves to His level.

HEBREWS REJECTED VOICE OF GOD. The first 11 verses of Hebrews 12 finish the story of the fateful day when the Hebrew people finally approached Mt. Sinai to meet with God AND receive His covenant. The writer of this epistle is reminding his fellow Hebrew believers that their forefathers REJECTED hearing God's voice and having that level of relationship with Him, telling Moses that he could be the go-between. The writer of this epistle goes on to explain that because the people didn't want to hear God directly, they weren't able to rest. Not only did they lack internal peace after this, but they were unable to fight in the spirit instead having to rely solely upon Moses and Aaron.

Now our reading begins:

Hebrews 4:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Verse 11: let's hear God's voice, let's seek Him out, listen to what He's saying, so that we may rest on His Truth—which is the only Truth—instead of ours or someone else's.

Verse 12: the word of God is our weapon, a sword. Let's review the qualities of this sword:

- **The word word is logos**, which is the written/recorded word of God—what we call the Bible. I'll get into what the Scriptures represent next week but for now, the words recorded and written down are one aspect of God's voice AND our access to it. We cannot make the same mistake of the ancient Hebrews to shut out the voice of God and rely upon someone else to do it for us.
- **It's living**. God's word aren't just letters on a page. They were breathed onto those pages by God Himself and when swung, like a sword, their power goes forth.
- **It's active**. Translates to powerful and effectual. Meaning when you and I speak God's Word out loud, it effects EVERYONE who hears them whether they're die hard atheists or devout Christians.
- **It's sharp**. I'll get into this next Sunday as well, but speaking God's Word separates what is true vs. what's false.
- It cuts away the grayness of confusion and makes things black and white.
- It slices into moral conundrums that we argue over and reveals what is light and what is darkness.
- It accomplishes all these things within us when we hear it, and within others.
- **It exposes**. The Lord's Word exposes darkness, wickedness, and unbelief within people when it's spoken.
- **The mark of a true disciple** pursuing their sanctification is someone who allows God's Word to accomplish this work within us, giving us the opportunity to repent from any belief, opinion, or lifestyle that conflicts with what God declared in His Word.

WORDS MATTER. Hebrews 12 reminds us that all of creation was made with words...from God. The words God used to make the heavens and the earth are recorded in Genesis 1. Stop and think about that for a moment: **we have a written record of how God made everything.** We have the exact words He said.

CREATES GALAXIES & RAIN FIRE. God speaking can create galaxies and form mankind from the dirt of the earth, and it can also rain fire down from heaven to obliterate wickedness.

HE IS IN HIS WORDS. The Word of God isn't just His words, like with any other book we read of things people say. The reason it's called LIVING or GOD BREATHED is because the Lord Himself is in them.

John 1:1-5 (ESV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

MYSTERY! Pay close attention: in verse 1 John reveals a mystery that should boggle us even if we've read these verses 100x. **John doesn't separate Jesus from His Words.** John makes them one: He actually calls Jesus the Word and uses the same term logos. The Word is Jesus and Jesus is the Word.

SWORD IS SPOKEN. Please understand that the Sword of the Spirit is the SPOKEN word. What you have in the book before you is the RECORDED Word given for our use. It's not a matter of reading the words silently in our minds, as we're taught to do in Western culture.

It's a matter of adding physical breath and speaking them out loud.

ANCIENT ISRAEL. In ancient Hebraic society, God's Word was always spoken out loud whether it was in a public gathering like synagogue, or if one person was by him or herself. Even modern day Jews tend to read it out loud, even when they're "studying."

WHEN WE QUOTE GOD'S WORD, THE VERY PERSON, CHARACTER, AND LIFE OF CHRIST IS BEHIND THEM.

VS OUR OPINIONS. Compare doing this to merely sharing our opinions and feelings. We do fight battles of words here, but how often are we quoting or at least referring to the Scriptures vs. just telling people what we think? I include myself in this. Again I say: a partisan Christian speaks not from the basis of the Bible, but from the Repub or Demo platform and thus ignores the power of the sharp weapon God gave us.

The Holy Spirit will only add His life giving breath to our words when He is the One inspiring us to fight.

Verse 3: all things were made by Jesus...the spoken word created the heavens and the earth.

Verse 4: His word is light and life.

Verse 5: when we speak God's Word; darkness, evil, and ignorance cannot overcome it. The kingdom of Satan can try to censor, suppress, and make laws against God's Word and even convince people that it's "hate speech" ***but it will never succeed as long as the saints of God stand up and speak it regardless of consequences.***

TRIBULATION. After Jesus reveals the rise of evil during the 7 year Tribulation and the horrifying oppression all believers will experience during that time, He says this:

Matthew 24:35 (ESV)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

WORDS MATTER, not just actions.

CENSORSHIP. Neither the government nor Big Tech are attempting to stop the food drive or the flood relief efforts. They're not afraid of our donations of money & goods to needy people, or fixing the broken stairs of an old widow. They aren't fighting against building a church building or forming a church basketball team.

AFRAID OF.... Instead, they're spending vast amounts of time, great resources, and hard labor censoring posts, putting people in SM jail, canceling accounts, and taking down videos so that we can't hear the information within.

WORDS MATTER and that's what the Devil is afraid of. He's not afraid of my opinion or yours. He's not afraid of the Republican Party.

He fears the Church boldly speaking God's Word and not backing down.

LUCIFER BEAT. Last week I read Revelation 12:11 where the saints of God conquer Lucifer himself with the blood of the Lamb **AND the Words of their testimony!**

AMAZING POWER: The human tongue carries amazing power because we're made in the likeness of God:

James 3:1-5 (ESV)

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

² For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

³ If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

⁴ Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

RUDDER. James states that the tongue is the most powerful part of human anatomy. He compares it to a rudder: a ship may be huge, massive even, but the whole vessel is steered by this little thing called a rudder. Such are we: what we choose to say directs our entire lives.

WHAT WE SAY HAS THIS MUCH POWER BECAUSE IT'S THE LORD WHO SHARED THIS ABILITY WITH US. THE POWER TO CREATE AND GIVE LIFE...OR CALL FIRE DOWN FROM HEAVEN.

“NOT ME” You might be thinking *“Sure, if God speaks that’s really powerful and effective, but I’m not Him! What good is it really doing for me to quote the Bible?”*

SONS & DAUGHTERS. When you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you became a son or daughter of the same being Who spoke everything into being. Your spirit was born again into His exact likeness. What’s more is this:

1 Corinthians 2:10-13 (ESV)

¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

¹¹ For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

We have received God the Holy Spirit inside of us. He has merged with our Spirit and we are one. Not only will He help us to understand the Scriptures, but for those words to become living and active...not just for us, but THROUGH us. When Jesus left, He didn’t leave us as orphans...He has sent the Divine Counselor to live within us.

God's spoken Word requires 3 elements: 1) a being, a speaker/tongue, 2) the words themselves, 3) breath.

Now understand the power God has given us.

- Jesus is the words.
- The Holy Spirit is the breath.
- We are the being, the speaker.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Look at verse 17: the purpose of the Bible is to equip us for every good work. What work is Paul referring to? Teaching (doctrine), reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness all require *speaking* and Paul is telling his protégé that his best tool for these 4 things is quoting the Bible.

2 Peter 1:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

REFERS TO BIBLE. Peter is telling the story about how he was on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Christ when he saw Jesus transfigure and heard the voice of God the Father. Yet he doesn't tell his flock to rely on that alone, but starting with verse 19 refers them back to the Bible calling it a "a lamp shining in a dark place." He goes on to explain that the Bible wasn't just written down...as a matter of fact, very few people in his day contained a written version of the Bible and had to rely on hearing it spoken!

Verse 21: the prophets of old SPOKE what they heard from God and to effectively wield the most powerful weapon in the world—the Sword of the Spirit—we must do the same.

AS IF DEAD. BTW, John and James were with Pete that day and, at one point, they all fell down as if dead. What caused this reaction? It was when God the Father SPOKE.

JOHN ON PATMOS. Years later as an old man, John was on the island of Patmos and when Risen Jesus appeared to him he fell down as if he were dead. What enabled John to rise to his feet? When Jesus SPOKE.

Life and death are in the power of the tongue.

Look what Paul tells the Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

WORDS SPOKEN LED TO SALVATION. The people at Thessalonica were able to be Saved because God's Word was spoken to them...more souls in the army of God! Battle won!

CONCLUSION. When the Lord commissioned Nehemiah to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem the devil fought him every step of the way. The working environment was so hostile that this happened:

Nehemiah 4:15-20 (ESV)

¹⁵ When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work.

¹⁶ From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah,

¹⁷ who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.

¹⁸ And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

¹⁹ And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another.

²⁰ In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

Notice the last line: "our God will fight for us." Yet the still wore armor and carried weapons. God wasn't doing everything for them, He was equipping and empowering them!

So He has done the same with us!