

The Battle- an introduction.

Ephesians 6:10-18 ESV

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(11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

(12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

(13) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

As you know I love to read church history and the biographies of great men and women of God down through history.

I read of their epic struggles and their great passions and I am inspired by the lives they lived and the cause of Christ that they so readily gave themselves to.

Yet at the same time I find myself becoming increasingly distressed.

Not distressed at the local church, she is the bride of Christ, the answer to the world today.

But distressed at those that who call themselves church leaders, especially those that clamors for the positions and titles of national or international church leadership.

When I read of the generals of old they had a sense of eternity on the inside of them.

They had a sense that they were living for something bigger than themselves. There was a sense of a unity against a common enemy.

The church was not established by Jesus Christ as a vehicle to garner social favor but as a machine for spiritual change.

Christ did not come to gather social acceptance but to engage in spirited warfare. He came to see the destruction of the kingdom of darkness and make manifest the kingdom of light

One is a political agenda, the other military.

Thomas Carlyle said: *“If there is no enemy to fight. If no fight, no victory and if no victory there is no crown.”*

When a military force has no external battles to fight it becomes a political machine, ran by politicians with self-serving agendas.

It is the same with the church.

The church of Jesus Christ has been the most radical and politically transforming agent of change in modern history.

Think about all that the church has passed down when she has been engaged in the establishment of the kingdom.

A Christian stopped the slave trade!

Labor laws were brought in to protect children by Christians.

All modern social change and aid organizations started as organizations run by Christian.

All of the major universities and medical facilities – again Christian.

When I say: *radical and politically transforming agent of change in modern history*

Some of you hear: “Protesters and placards and political candidates

That is not what I am saying. Why?

Because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

I am saying that all of those changes came about as a bi-product of the Christians winning battles for the souls of men and women.

They came about because a group of people was determined to live their life in such a way as to make a difference

Because a group of people realized that Hell and Heaven were realities and we were engaged in a war for the souls of men and women

That they came about because the church plundered hell with the aim of populating heaven.

And as a result of these great spiritual victories we reclaimed ground from the enemy and we celebrated by restoring grace and mercy where there had only been sin to shame

Today on TV and in the church

What we are seeing played out on our television screens from the newsrooms of the world is a war with no clear enemy and no clearly defined sense of possible victory.

What we have is a barely defined enemy and a poorly communicated goal of victory.

Why is this the case?

First of all because People don't want to define the enemy because they are scared of being labeled as politically incorrect or religiously intolerant

Secondly they don't want to talk about victory because they don't want to admit that there is either an enemy or a war going on. They are peace-loving people and want to only tolerate the notion of peace being a possibility.

Neville Chamberlin was like that in WW2.

Neville Chamberlin was a man who could not, because of his love of the concept of peace, deal with the threat of the thought of war.

He was known to the French as Mr. "I love Germany". He admitted that there was a problem, that there was military build up in Germany taking place, but he would not and he refused to deal with the stated threat and intent of Germany to invade both France and Czechoslovakia.

In September of 1938 he arrive back for a meeting with Hitler in Berlin. He said:

*"My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. **I believe it is peace for our time.** We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And now I recommend you to go home and sleep quietly in your beds."*⁴

Twelve months later the Germans invaded Poland. As a result of this attack Chamberlain said:

"This is a sad day for all of us, and to none is it sadder than for me. Everything that I have worked for, everything that I hoped for, everything I have believed in during my public life has crashed into ruins."

Denying the existences of war.

Denying the threat of war neither means the absence of war or the existence of peace.

As goes the Church, so goes the world.

When Jesus was describing His mission He described it in these terms:

The aim of Christ is to institute the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The aim of Christ was to restore that which had been lost with the fall of man and reinstitute that which had been proclaimed since time began

When He came to earth it was with one aim and one aim only...to crush the enemies head under HIS foot.

He was not out to engage in a discussion.
He was not out to engage in a debate

He was not looking for a road map to peace, but a Highway to Hell

He was out for victory
He was committed to one outcome and one outcome alone.

He had come to annihilate His enemy and He had come to finish a battle that had started thousands of years before.

Satan had started in on HIS territory; HE was going to finish it on Satan's

Luke 12:51

(51) Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.

Matthew 10:34-39 ESV

(34) "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

He under stood that:

Mat 11:12

(12) From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.

The religious institutions of Jesus' day were happy with recruiting, adherence, and even followers, Christ was after something else.

What He was asking for was unqualified allegiance, something that even the most esteemed rabbi of the day would not demand.

The central point of this passage of scripture is that the Kingdom of God must take precedence over every other human relationship.

It must take precedent one all other activities and our attitudes must be vigilant and violent when it comes to the regulating of the assets of our life.

The issue of Spiritual Warfare

Paul in Ephesians 6 makes some incredible statements.

Statements that sum up and expand on what Christ was talking about in Matthew and about what was portrayed in both Genesis and Isaiah

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He is saying we are engaged in a battle with a very specific enemy and his battle is real and it is best described as warfare.

He goes on and later describes the armour that protects the Christian Warrior who is engaged in this battle:

Ephesians 6:14-19 ESV

(14) Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

(15) And, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

(16) In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

(17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

(18) Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

(19) And also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,

This battle is very real to Paul.

A very real battle, with very real victories and very casualties

What spiritual warfare is not

In the coming months we will look at the nature of the battle we are fighting.

We will look at the nature of our enemy
The nature of our warfare

The weapons of our enemy
And the weapons of our warfare.

However to start our series, I would like to look briefly at some of the misconceptions and misrepresentations of what spiritual warfare is.

Unfortunately, the greatest causality in this whole battle, as in all wars down through history, has been truth.

In our modern church era, many Christians, with many agendas have perverted, distorted, and wrongly interpreted these scriptures.

Many have done so in a sincere attempt to help people,
Some have done so for financial gain, because the spectacular always sells more books than the significant.

My rule of thumb has always been, if it is billed as a new truth, a new revelation, a new insight, if you peel it back, it will always be based upon an old lie, old heresy or false assumption.

There IS nothing new under the sun.
The best form of any deception is that which is closest to the truth.
A half-truth is as hurtful as a whole lie.

Some of these are specific examples, but they will give you an idea of the sorts of traps or ways of thinking that we can fall into or be lulled into.

a) Spiritual Warfare is not: The devil made me do it

Demons are not the primary source of spiritual failure for the Christian.

This has become the common alibi of Christians that belong to Charismatic and Pentecostal groups.

1. In the epistles there are ten references to demons (mostly relating certain facts), but there are over fifty references to "the flesh" as the primary enemy of the Christian. The New Testament perspective is that the major area of conflict is in the arena of the flesh, not demonic influence.

2. Some are claiming that demons have names that reflect their influence. Names such as, "lust," "murder," "envy," "gossip," etc. Yet, nowhere in the Bible do we find any support for this teaching. Scripture explicitly says that these actions are a product of the flesh (e.g. Gal. 5:19-21).

b) Christian Spiritual warfare is Playing with new Age theology

There is an email list that has over 130,000 people in it and the product I want to tell you know about, was endorsed by the MAJOR so called prophetic ministries in the USA.

This product was made public on this list in *October 17, 2005*

The email letter was entitled called *"HOW to CLEANSE YOUR HOUSE and the LAND IT SITS ON"*

The newsletter was basically an ad for a book called *Portals To Cleansing - Taking Back Your Land From The Hands Of The Enemy* by Dr. Henry Malone.

Along with the book a *Portals to Cleansing - Property Dedication Kit* was also being sold. Here are the pictures included.



"A unique kit with instructions, scriptures, oil and stakes to dedicate your property to the Lord. "

The pictures are apparently meant to demonstrate the use of the cleansing "kit" by driving stakes with Bible inscriptions around your property and then anointing your property line and/or stakes with some kind of holy anointing "oil"

Apparently this kit makes an “EXCELLENT companion resource to the apparently Awesome Book "Portals To Cleansing"” Book and Property Dedication Kit are sold separately.



Renee Rodriguez was a part of Ted Haggard’s church when they implemented this practices city wide to cleanse the demons from the air...it was part of the New the Apostolic Vision.

She describes how they filled 5-gallon spray cans with anointing oil and attempted to spray the whole city.

And that somehow walking around Colorado Springs spraying cans of oil would drive away devils

Here are three problems I have with this:

(1) Jesus didn’t need/use 5 gallon cans of oil.... why should we?

(2) Portals are not mentioned anywhere in the bible

They are however mentioned in New Age Theology and practices of Witches

(3) You all probably sat there and went...Oh Ted Haggard..that's why..look what happened to him

But remember at the time, Ted was the golden boy of the so-called International Prayer Movement – and the modern church swallowed this whole!

People repackaging old heresy as new biblical truth and the reason people do not challenge them is:

- a) They don't read and know there bibles
- b) They do not know what it is they believe – they have no doctrine
- c) Because they have confused marketing with Godly character and Christian credibility

1 John 1:5 ESV

(5) This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Church I got delivered from this stuff!

I was saved out of a background that included new Age mysticism and occult practices.

c) Spiritual Warfare is not Using non biblical sources for Christian insight

Peter Wagner in His book *Confronting Powers* says:

Certain people such as shamans, witch doctors, practitioners of Eastern religions, New Age gurus or professors of the occult ... are examples of the kind of people who may have much more extensive knowledge of the spirit world than most Christian have.

So here we have a so-called premier leader in Christian Circles saying that a real good source on where we should go to look for victorious Christian living is the representatives of the demonic.

If Satan is the father of all liars,
How can you trust those that work with him to tell you the truth?

Now, I am not making a comment on Peter Wagner the man, but I am making a comment on his published material.

Why are we as Christians being encouraged to go to **shamans, witch doctors, practitioners of Eastern religions, New Age gurus or professors of the occult** for spiritual answers and not the bible

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 ESV

(10) There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer

(11) Or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead,

(12) For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you.

I will tell you why I think this has happened

The leaders of the modern so-called spirit filled western church have become desperate.

They have no real spiritual power

Their prophecies are lame,
The word of knowledge inaccurate,
The only miracles they gave for are financial and
The healings appear to be bogus

The Supernatural manifestation of the power of God is a natural bi-product of a healthy church and a health life and a health spiritual walk.

It is suppose to be the daily bread of the average Christian

Acts 2:42-43 ESV

(42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

(43) And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

It comes from:

Sound Doctrine

A commitment to the local church

Personal consecrated spirituality

And a generous and glad spirit.

And out of that came signs and wonders

These ministries who proclaim to be heralding these new things do not belong to local churches, they do not endorse local churches, they are by and large not friends of local churches

And it is Christians within their local churches and their local church communities that are supposed to be moving in the supernatural power of God and establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

d) Spiritual warfare is misrepresented as an offensive, rather than defensive, campaign including verbal assaults on Satan

We will spend much more time on this as the weeks go on.

But let me put it to you this way,

If Christians would spend more time expanding the kingdom of God and less time fighting a defeated enemy, we would see more souls saved, the gospel proclaimed, and greater good done!

I want to recommend for your homework this afternoon to read all of Romans 8 and dwell on it.

I want to just highlight this one verse and present my final thought to you on this area.

Romans 8:37-39 ESV

*(37) No, in all these things we are **more than conquerors through him who loved us.***

(38) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

(39) Nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

No, in all these things...what things?

Tribulation

Distresses

Persecutions

Famine

Nakedness

Danger

And anything else like that!

And also over sin, Satan, angels, powers, anything in creation!

So what is covered here, what areas are we more than conquerors over?

Personal distress, physical and financial distress, spiritual distress

In all these things we are more than conquerors...correct?

Question?

What is more than a conqueror?

What is greater than an invading army?

An invading force?

How about ruler?

How about master?

Friend the battle we are engaged in is not one of invasion, but occupation.

We are not victims

We are not the oppressed

So many people live and pray like they are the victims of a great cosmic conspiracy, not a cosmic victory

The battle has already been won.

The enemy has been vanquished

We are the mop up troops.

We are the occupational forces.

We are here to expand the kingdom of God and return the spoils to the victor

The letter to the Ephesians

The letter to the Ephesians was written in AD 57, the letter to the Roman church, AD 62

- Pompey made the region of Judah/Israel a client kingdom of Rome in 63 BC
- Paul was born around 2BC
- In 6 AD Augustus makes it a Roman province
- He died between 67AD and 70 AD

Paul's paradigm and reference point his entire life was the Roman army.

As a boy of 8 years of age, he watched an invading army come and conquered his nation, he then watch the armies of that nation occupy and expand it's kingdoms and influences.

This was his worldview.

This was his reference point

So when he talks about warfare that is the place he is coming from

So lets have a look at the make up of the Roman army

Offensive weaponry of the Romans

1. Heavy infantry

These people were professional soldiers; they were Roman citizens

These men were armed with swords and two javelins.

A dagger

Heavy shoes

A marching pack

14 days of food

Water skins, cooking equipment and a shovel or a wicker basket

The javelins were thrown at an attacking force before hand-to-hand combat was entered into.

They might also have heavy chain mail

And possibly a large spear again, the hastat

2. The auxiliary forces

This was an army made up of non-roman citizens, slaves, or people from occupied lands.

As with all the soldiers, they had to provide their own weapons

3. The Cavalry

The riders had helmets and chain mail

They would have either had a

Spear or javelin between 6 to 12 foot long

Shields

And swords that were longer than the foot soldiers so they could reach their enemy when he was on the ground

4. The Artillery

There was the Scorpion bolt shooter – it was a massive crossbow

It was the standard legionary catapult with the invasion of Britain in 55 BC

There were ballista, was similar to a catapult and it threw large rocks over the walls of cities that threw spears or objects at the enemy

Then there was the Onager, which was the name of a weapon taken from a kicking mule because it was used to knock down city walls

Then the most famous was the Catapult that was used to throw objects, jars of burning oil or rocks at the enemies lines.

Once an enemy had been defeated, these weapons were of no practical use in the daily skirmishes and the daily occupation of a city

NONE of these weapons are mentioned by Paul!

In Ephesians that the only weapons we have, is defensive armor and a short, sharp two edged sword

Why?

Why would Paul only mention defensive weapons and weapons of an occupying force?

Because we are more than conquerors!

Someone once wrote a big book – sold millions about how all our spiritual amour is defensive, our only weapon is the sword and we have all this defensive amour because the battle is so fierce and vicious.

Another guy that implied that Paul's list was incomplete because we have the weapon of

Prayer and

The weapon of praise

And the weapon of preaching

The weapon of our testimony

Let me save you \$14.99 and the poor man's reputation by not mentioning his name

We have the defensive amour of an occupying force, because we are following the victor.

We are no longer engaged in a fierce battle

"It is finished"

We have amour that will protect us against skirmishes.

We don't need siege engines, or horses or artillery, because the victory is already ours.

We need protective gear because we are fighting against insurgence and pockets of resistance.

We are fighting against terrorists who want to take back the land that has been taken from them

The penalty for attacking a roman soldier was death,
But still the defeated foe would try and attack

Some times soldiers would find themselves isolated, unprepared, the amour not maintained, the swords not sharpened, they would leave the barracks when they should not have.

And they would be attacked and wounded or killed

We have the armor we need for the battle we are fighting.

Paul does not mention any of the offensive weaponry of the Romans in his description of warfare in the book of the Ephesians

He only outlines what is needed by a single legionary who is in full control and has the full support of the ruling and occupying forces

Friends, your paradigm and mindset changes as to the nature of the war when you realize that we have already won, and all we are doing is occupying till He comes.

Conclusion

In the coming months we will look at this topic extensively

We will be looking at:

The nature of our warfare
Our common enemy
The weapons of our enemy

Then we will go on and look at the Warrior

The result I believe is that you will be freed from the religious and superstitious mindset that most of us have been brought up with – myself included.

Friend your victory is assured.

The greatest battle that has ever taken place has not been for the payment of your mortgage, but for the saving of your soul

Don't lose sight of the eternal implications of what Christ did in the push to devalue His work in the name of commerce.

I started today by saying:

The aim of Christ was to restore that which had been lost with the fall of man and reinstitute that which had been proclaimed since time began

When He came to earth it was with one aim and one aim only...to crush the enemies head under HIS foot.

Never forget that the greatest thing a Christian can ever do is introduce a sinner, just like you were, to a Savior, just like you needed

Let us pray