

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times
"Spiritual Warfare" # 20
2 Corinthians 10:1-5
9-18-16 Sun PM

Before we got saved there was no struggle with the flesh and the Spirit because we were not indwelt with the spirit, but now we are, and there is a war within. We have two natures that pull us, one toward heaven and the other toward the earthly.

The believer has three great enemies- the world, the flesh, and the devil. We want to blame our sin on the world or the devil, but if you are like me, it is my own flesh that I have the most problem with.

In fact, all through the NT you see Scriptures that deal with the believer's struggle with sin or the flesh. This struggle will be with us till we shed these bodies and go into the Lord's presence.

TT- Paul was in a battle with the forces of wickedness at Corinth and he was suiting up for the battle. We need to be armed for the battle for lost souls! (context)

I. Choose the Right Weapons (vs. 3-4a).

The false teachers accused Paul of walking in the flesh morally with greed and pride [v. 2]. Paul affirmed he walked in the flesh physically because he was a man [v. 3].

Note the words "according" and "in" the flesh. Paul said he did not war after the flesh with carnal weapons but spiritual weapons.

"War" We are all in a battle against the kingdom of darkness, we fight for truth, the glory of God, and the souls of men. We contend for the faith.

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.

We don't fight with human methods, wisdom, or human ideology. We don't fight in courts, congress, or the White House. These are carnal or fleshly weapons. Our weapons are spiritual- the Word of God and prayer (Eph. 6:12-18).

I. Choose the right weapons (vs. 3-4a).

II. Pull Down Strongholds (v. 4b).

The word "stronghold" means fortresses. Corinth had an acropolis, a fortified place the inhabitants could retreat when attacked.

Fleshly weapons can't assault the strongholds that unbelievers are settled in.

III. Cast Down Imaginations (v. 5).

"Imaginations" here refers to speculations. This refers to any human or demonic thoughts, opinions, reasoning's, and viewpoints.

Paul is not referring demons but ideologies. The battle is with false ideologies that men and demons propagate. Doomed souls are held captive by the false ideas of the world and the devil.

We battle for the minds of people who are held captive to lies that oppose Scripture. Paul himself was captive to Judaism that had become a ritualistic system of rules and works-righteousness. He was in a stronghold.

Phil 3:4-6, Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

(5) Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; (6) Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

On the Damascus Road his stronghold crumbled under God's power and he was captured by the Lord.

All unbelievers have a stronghold in which they attempt to hide from the knowledge of God. They take many forms- philosophy, psychology, religion, cults, evolution, self, and secular humanism.

These strongholds can only be cast down by prayer and the Word of God. Therefore we must confront lies and strongholds with the truth and with prayer.

I. Choose the right weapons (vs. 3-4a).

II. Pull Down Strongholds (v. 4b).

III. Cast Down Imaginations (v. 5).

IV. Bring Every Thought Captive (vs. 5b-6).

The object of warfare is to change how lost people think so they will not be captive to damning ideology. The truth is the weapon of choice.

The sword of the spirit which is the Word of God. We smash the stronghold and lead the captives subject to Jesus.

What does all this mean? If the weapons to pulling down, cast down, and bringing out is the truth and prayer, then we need to know our bible and pray.