

VINEYARD HARVEST

H O U S E C H U R C H

The Sword of the Spirit



The Word of God



THE ART OF WAR

The battle is won and the armies of God have been sent to finish the war. Even though Jesus won the battle the war is not over. The decree of God against mankind for their sin was paid for by the blood of Jesus and the keys (authority) to the kingdom have been taken back by Him who sits on the throne. He must remain seated till all His enemies are placed under His feet, then, He too will be subject to the Almighty 1 Cor 15:58.

The subsequent journey for man after restoration through what Jesus did on the cross is the war known as spiritual warfare. Jesus had to fulfil God's demand for a perfect sacrifice before He could finish the war using us. The three persons involved in the war are Jesus, mankind and the devil. This warfare is interwoven into every fabric of society and into the lives of all human beings. The wisdom of God now decrees that believers born of the Spirit and of the word are to fight against evil spiritual beings in heavenly places Eph 3:10 & Eph 6:12. Therefore, we are pitted in battle with evil forces that are bent on destroying us. Strange as it may seem, it carries a movie like theme to it. Yet, it is **this** truth that governs our lives for better or for worse. Anyone who disregards it, does so at their own peril. Yet, for those of us who have understood it, even slightly, we know that it carries deadly intent.

The art of war as conducted by men on earth cannot compare to what is going on in the heavens. The war that rages in the heavens is on a scale unimaginable. A spiritual person does not engage in earthly war or violence by his own understanding. Rather, he is exposed to demonic influences that rage in his triune being of body, soul (will, intellect & emotions) and spirit. Hence, the aim of the spiritual person who is a child of God is to establish his authority over these forces concerning his own life and then to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth by violence of a spiritual nature. The new world belongs to the sons of God because mankind and the earth suffer spiritual violence. The earth moans and groans for its redemption through them. This makes the child of God a violent man. Yet, his violence is not conducted with weapons of a carnal nature but of a spiritual nature having obtained them from God. He uses these weapons without mercy to destroy all his enemies. One such weapon and sitting on top of the pile carrying nuclear style of explosives is the weapon of **love**. After that come so many other weapons like faith, grace, mercy, kindness, meekness, patience, long suffering and the like to mention a few. Added to this, the weapons of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, obedience and righteousness give deadly power to the assault on all evil. Good in particular overcomes evil. The gifts of the Holy Spirit coupled with faith penetrate the very powers of darkness and overcome them with impunity which shakes their kingdom and takes back what the devil stole from so many. Sickness and disease have to flee along with oppression and depression just to name a few. Death has lost its grip and rules no more. This is evident from the conduct of Jesus on earth. His victory was won by such methods and His power. His power is beyond question the greatest power on earth and in the heavens. This is no fairy tale because we can see the results of this kind of power demonstrated quite regularly. Christianity or the Christ life is still well and alive on planet earth in spite of incredible persecution through the ages. It is still the greatest influence in the conscience of mankind that this world has ever known. Jesus imparted this power through the Holy Spirit to believing men and women all over the world who have consistently demonstrated the same through the ages even until today.

My intention behind writing this particular theme of spirituality (spiritual warfare) is for the purposes of opening the eyes of the believer first, before attempting to open the eyes of the unbeliever. The reason for this is obvious.

Unless the Church is victorious in its warfare, it cannot expect to win or keep souls.

Many in the Church have discounted this aspect of Christianity thinking it spooky and have branded it as unnecessary or not within the scheme of God's plan for the Church. Spiritual warfare is generally thought of as a fight against demonic forces in a raw sense of grappling with them and casting them out. However, while this is only a pin prick in the scheme of spiritual warfare, the fight is a lot deeper than that. When we see souls going to an eternal hell, we must realise the implications of warfare that run deeper than just being denied a good life on earth by the devil. The heavens tell the true story of what is involved in this fight. Fight we must and win we must but what we know about fighting and winning will amount to nothing till we are surrendered to His will. That is why Jesus said; 'not my will be done but yours Oh! God.' Not one battle or war is won on the strength of the flesh of man. It is not by might or by strength but by His Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who wields the sword of the word of God and carries the armour of God in battle. We only fight by His instruction and guidance as it is He who trains our fingers for battle.

No man goes to war without first taking into account what is in store for him. Foolish is the person who thinks they can conduct their lives without first counting the cost of following Jesus and serving Him who sits on the throne. He who sits on the throne sits there because He counted the cost of obtaining that throne by giving His own life. ***He understood the price before He agreed to submit to the cost.*** It is the same for us. Our Christian faith is about accepting the cost of our faith while living in a world that persecutes and mocks us for our faith. It was in the midst of this mockery when Jesus hung on the cross that we see our Lord's power because he could lay down His life and pick it up again **John 10.17,18**. This is what makes Him God. That is what is translated into our faith. He rose from the dead.

I urge you as a Christian to understand that your problems in life are not merely a product of human nature or earthly circumstances but of an evil spiritual nature that is in force in our world and in the heavens. These evil forces are fighting on two fronts. One battle they have is against the angels of God and another is against us on earth. Both battles are won by following the rules of engagement set by God. The waxing and waning of spiritual warfare is deeply linked to our ability to obey God and grasp the plan of God for the earth and all of mankind. When we understand this, it will be easier to take our focus of ourselves or the problems on earth and look to what is out there in the vast expanse called the universe.

My encouragement to you is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Secondly, to pray that your eyes will be opened to the realities of everyday living and the purposes of God in you. Everything you do from the time you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour (1) should be for the glory of God, (2) for the establishing of His kingdom on earth, (3) for the edification of the saints and (4) for the salvation of souls. This will attract spiritual warfare.

To get into this fight you do not have to do much. When you are called and chosen, you are automatically in this fight whether you like it or not. In fact, you are in the fight even before you accept Jesus because the evil one will do anything to keep you as a sinner and hide the gospel from you Eph 2.2,3 - 2 Cor 4.3,4. That is why so many only come to the Lord under duress (in most cases) and when they are sick or near death. Spiritual matters are hidden from them till there is no place to turn. Then they seek a higher source called God. The subsequent journey of life after salvation will cause you to learn much about the invisible world. Therefore, always be on guard, because the consequences are real and deadly. Many have lost their lives, suffered unduly with all manners of evil and faced many dangers that they never thought they would have to face in life. Many have been given a grain fed diet of the gospel of prosperity and niceties, while others have been told that it's all about love and 'she will be right mate', only to realise that this is not quite true. Others have taken on spiritual warfare as a game or a good thing to do, only to be overcome by the devil at their own game.

The devil fights dirty because he is a legalist and knows what his rights are. In other words, God's commandments to us do not apply to him as he is already condemned, so he can fight dirty. As for us, we are bound by God's ways and commandments while attempting to work out who we are, where we came from and where we are going. Often time our eyes are focussed on earthly things and because of that, our prayers are weak with want and need. May God have mercy upon our souls and teach us what it means to stand after having done all.

I can write reams of paper on what spiritual warfare is about. Yet, to keep it simple, I can say this. The battle is about **believing God** through what He has said to us and about taking control of our minds and senses. The battle is very subtle and insidious in many cases. The people who face problems in life rarely understand the source of the problem. Hence they blame it on human nature or habits. While these may be the external manifestations, it is not the true reason for their behaviour. For example; someone may be an angry person consistently and not knowing why but blames it on childhood shortcomings and upbringing. However, the truth is evil spiritual influences are behind it. This is made evident by their confession in counselling and the subsequent prayer that sets them free from these forces.

I have walked this journey for almost 62 years and have discovered that most people will turn a blind eye to the truth in lieu of Godly solutions. They rather be captives than free citizens of the Kingdom of heaven.

Lots of love

Pastor Noble

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