

Last week, I laid out for you what we are going to be studying and learning this year; warring, winning, and witnessing. There will be times when these topics overlap. Simply put, we win the wars when we witness. At other times we will focus in on one or the other. There may be times when we spend weeks on one of them and there may be weeks where we bounce back and forth. It is with those realities in mind that I encourage you to commit to memory the passages I gave you last week; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 9:24 and today's passage, Ephesians 6:10-19.

Given the events of the first eleven days of 2020, I believe it's appropriate to start with a sermon on warring. Now, let me be clear. When I refer to warring, I am NOT referring to national policy. I AM referencing Kingdom policy. In other words, I am speaking to the biblical FACT that Christians are involved in spiritual warfare.

I am addressing that whether or not you're actively fighting spiritual battles, spiritual battles are being fought. There are multiple reasons you may not be actively warring. Maybe you deny the reality of spiritual warfare. You may have given up the fight. You may be in the infirmary because you've been wounded in the fray. But one of the functions of the church is to equip God's servants for soldiering. That means educating Christians on the reality of spiritual conflict. It means teaching that no one is safe, not even on the sidelines (mainly because there are no sidelines). It means treating the wounded and encouraging them to re-enter the battle.

And if we are going to be obedient and faithful warriors, we must know who we are fighting. One of the greatest tragedies of the last 50 or so years is that many Christians think they are fighting the good fight when they are actually warring against God. We have been deceived to the Devil's delight. We are busy fighting in our own strength, with our own strategies, those whom we have been duped into thinking are our enemies.

It is imperative that we rightly identify the enemy. Otherwise, we might as well be tilting at windmills. Or worse yet, we might be harming the very kingdom to which we belong. Identifying the correct enemy is so important that the Lord commanded the Holy Spirit to inspire Paul to clearly define our enemy . . .

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-19

- I. Distinguishing the Enemy
 - A. **Letting the Word Identify the Enemy**
 - 1. Devil (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28)
 - a) Personal being (Job 1; Matt. 4)
 - (1) Enticing, Charismatic

- b) Powerful (2 Cor. 4:4)
 - (1) Opposite NOT Equal
 - (a) God produce for the purpose of devotion
 - (b) Satan perverts for the purpose of destruction
- c) Pernicious (1 Peter 5:8)
 - (1) Deceive, darken, and destroy
- 2. Demonic Subordinates
 - a) Rebellious angels (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:4)
 - b) Regimented (Eph. 6:12)
 - (1) Rulers and powers is not government
 - (a) Government is a gift from God (Rom. 13:1,4; 1 Peter 2:13-17)
 - c) Resourceful (1 Tim. 4:1)
 - d) Relentless (Civil War analogy)
- 3. Detailed Armor and Weaponry
 - a) Every piece of armor and weaponry mentioned in 14-19 is spiritual
 - (1) Truth, Righteousness, Gospel, Faith, Salvation, Word of God, Prayer
- B. Letting the World Identify the Enemy**
 - 1. Different People
 - a) Satan convinces Christians to fight against a lost society
 - b) God commands Christians to fight for lost souls
 - 2. Duped and Deceived
 - a) Them
 - (1) The lost have been deceived (Child soldiers)
 - b) Us
 - (1) When we wage war against people instead of powers and principalities we have been duped by Satan
 - (a) We become weapons against the very God who saved us
 - (b) When we demonize people we deny the real enemy
 - (c) When we deny the real enemy everyone loses
 - (2) We have forgotten how God views humanity (John 3:16)
 - (a) Woefully sinful but wondrously loved
 - (b) Worthy of salvation (Because He's gracious, not because we are)

Make no mistake, spiritual warfare is ongoing and it is difficult and can even be disastrous for Christians. It is a shame to see so many Christians who have resigned themselves to defeat. It is heartbreaking to witness Christians who believe that they can fully remove themselves from the war. It is frustrating when we fail to realize the futility of relying upon our own strength and our own strategies. But it is sickening when we fail to recognize the real enemy, choosing instead to war with rather than for those whom we are supposed to be fighting. When we turn our

attacks on different people rather than the Devil and his demons, we are actually harming the cause of Christ.

Will you commit to being a Christian warrior who fights against THE ADVERSARY? Before you head into battle will you pause to ask whether you are fighting the enemy of man and God or whether you are actually fighting man in the name of God?