Weapons to use for Victory in the Real Spiritual Warfare

Introduction

Thinking about these two words spiritual and warfare brings to mind the words **spirit** and **war**. We can define spiritual warfare as waring or fighting in the spiritual realm. It is a battle fought not in the physical but in the spiritual realm.

Today much of our world is at war with itself. Nations are at war with other nations. Tribes war against other tribes. Of deep concern is the threat of an impending nuclear war as many nations secretly develop weapons of mass destruction. All of these "wars" are in the physical realm and involve physical weapons. However, we must not be oblivious to the fact that there is a continuous war going on in the spirit realm 24 hours a day. The spirit realm that we don't see is far larger than the physical realm we can see. What we see in the physical realm is a manifestation of what has been settled in the spirit realm. War is occurring in the spirit realm and it is affecting our physical world. There is no 'demilitarised zone'.

"Know your enemy" if you want to be victorious! In the spirit realm we must first recognise our enemy and then know how to do battle. The apostle Paul strongly encouraged us neither to be a prey for our enemy nor to be ignorant of his devices.

Not only do we face an enemy; we also face the reality that there will be evil days. It isn't 'if' but 'when'. As believers living in this world warfare doesn't end and so it is vital that we learn how to fight! We need to recognise that the satanic realm is well organised and ready for battle. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul highlights the ranks of demonic forces, ***"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle isn't against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace."*** (Eph. 6:10-15)

The apostle Peter warned us that we have an arch enemy. ***"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*** (1 Pet. 5:8)

- **The Certainty of Spiritual Warfare**

"You will be opposed." "The devil is out to get you." "You are on his hit list." Do such statements frighten us? We are on a rescue mission. We are commissioned to plunder hell in order to populate heaven. We are filled with the Holy Spirit and appointed to co-labour with the Lord Jesus as He transfers men, women and children from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light.

Our Commanding Officer, the Lord Jesus, said that no one can enter a strong man's house and steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man and then he can plunder his house. (Mt. 12:29) What are the possessions? Wealth? Power? Influence? No! They are the precious souls of men, women and children. There is a saying, "The one who owns a slave, owns the slave's property." This means you don't need to struggle to rob a man of what he owns. Just enslave him then you can help yourself to whatever he has.

That explains why Satan goes after the people's souls. If he can enslave people – especially the youth of any nation – he takes charge of the nation's future. The souls of men, women and children are precious to both God and Satan. So Satan won't simply fold his arms and rest passively allowing anyone to break into his prison and plunder it. He will attempt to fight back on all fronts – personal, marital, business, our ministry etc. He doesn't just open his doors to let his prisoners go free! There

is great spiritual/physical danger involved in rescuing the souls of people from the grasp of the enemy. Satan will try to prey on us and won't let us go easily. We must be ready to fight back so we don't become casualties as we try to rescue others.

We must put on the whole armour of God at all times. The certainty of spiritual warfare can't be over-emphasised. Even when our enemy knows he has lost territory, he won't give up easily. The story of Jericho demonstrates this. The people of Jericho knew they had lost the battle. Still they closed Jericho up tightly. No one went out and no one could come in (Joshua 6:1) – a lockdown!

So we can be sure there will be opposition from the enemy. He totally opposes everything that is of God. One of the ways to know if you are moving in the direction of God's will for your life is the intensity of the opposition you face from the evil one. There won't be any opposition if you and Satan are both moving in the same direction. Even Paul was hindered by Satan. ***"For we wanted to come to you – certainly I, Paul, did again and again – but Satan stopped us."***(1 Thess. 2:18)

- **The Weapons of our Warfare**
  - **The Name of Jesus**

    The name of Jesus is the name above all names and all powers. We have been given the Power of Attorney by our Lord Jesus to use His exalted and victorious name to cast out demons and perform miraculous signs that will accompany us if we believe. We are protected and covered by the power in His name as we serve wherever He sends us. (See Mk. 16:17) No power of darkness can resist His name. God has elevated Him to the highest place of honour and given Him the name that is above all other names. (Phil. 2:9-11)
  - **The Blood of Jesus**

    The blood that redeemed our souls is precious and powerful. Demons can't withstand the power in the blood that redeemed us. When we protect ourselves by the blood of Jesus as we enter into the enemy's territory Rev. 12:10-11 says that we overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony.

    The blood of the Passover Lamb is a shadow of the blood of the Lord Jesus that was shed for us. If the blood of a physical lamb was efficacious, how much more the blood of the Lord Jesus that speaks better things than the blood of Abel! (Heb. 12:24)

    So when we are engaged in spiritual warfare the enemy may remind us of our sins or accuse us. In turn, we can remind him of the blood that was shed for the remission of our sins. ***"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'."*** (Acts 2:38)
  - **The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit**

    The Word of God is living and active. It can't just be compared to a two-edged sword. (See Heb. 4:12) God's Word is like fire and indeed like a mighty hammer that is able to crush a rock to pieces. (Jer. 23:29)

    Our prayer must be fuelled by the Word of God. God will always fulfil His promises. When the early disciples were faced with great opposition from the rulers of the Jews, they turned to prayer. They prayed using Scriptures. (See Acts 4:23-41) They prayed for great boldness in preaching God's Word, ***"Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders of the name of Your Holy Servant Jesus."*** (Acts 4:30) God responded and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the Word of God with boldness. There is power in the Word of God as we use it to confront the enemy in the spiritual battle.
  - **Praise and worship**

    All spiritual warfare should begin with praise and worship. This is how we invite God into a situation. He is the One who is mighty in battle. When we lift Him up He will draw all men to Himself.

This was the cry of King David in Psalm 149, ***"Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints. … Let them praise His name with dancing … For the Lord takes delight in His people. He crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in His honour and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and the double-edged sword in their hands. … This is the glory of all His saints."***

The combination of these two weapons – praise and worship – was used at the battle of Judah against three nations in the reign of King Jehoshaphat. ***"Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Listen to me Judah and the people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in His prophets and you will be successful'."*** (2 Chron. 20:21-22) They sought the Lord through prayer and fasting about what to do. They sang praises to God and the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir to fight each other.

- **Prayer**

  Paul exhorts us to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. (Eph. 6:18) We are limited in our knowledge, but the Holy Spirit isn't limited and He wants to help us. Pray always – perhaps sometimes in an unknown tongue if you are gifted by the Holy Spirit to do so. (Rom. 8:26-27)

- **Submission and Obedience**

  The walls of Jericho came down because the Israelites followed God's strategy. Each step of obedience is a step of victory. God's heart cry is for His people to follow His path and obey Him. Then their victory will be guaranteed. ***"If My people would but listen to Me, if Israel would follow My ways, how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their foes!"***

  We must be submissive to God to exercise authority. Only a person <u>under</u> authority can exercise authority. ***"Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*** This also means that we must be in submission to our leaders. Humility will neutralise pride which is the spirit of Satan.

➢ **Victory in the Spiritual Warfare**

All these things are not meant to frighten us but to alert us to the reality of the battle we are engaged in. It is nearly always best to avoid two extremes. The first extreme is to think/fear a demon behind every issue. The second extreme is to believe there is no such thing as satanic or demonic influence. Both extremes are dangerous and we must strike a balance between them.

A very important truth to focus on is that <u>Satan is a defeated foe</u>. His fate was sealed on the Cross of Calvary where the Lord Jesus shamed the principalities and powers. ***"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross."*** (Col. 2:15)

Before the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven He made a declaration. ***"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me."*** We are commissioned to go in the full knowledge of this. (Mt. 28:18)

If it is true that all – not some – power belongs to Jesus, where does the enemy derive his power? All the devil has are "wiles", "devices" and "cunning craftiness". He is like a roaring lion, but he isn't a real lion! There is only one real lion – the Lion of the tribe of Judah – our Lord Jesus Christ. We belong to Him! He is the one who commissioned us. ***"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name. This is My command: love each other."*** (Jn. 15:16-17)

What should our attitude be to spiritual warfare? It should be like the lion mentioned in Proverbs 30:30, ***"A lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing"***.

We must know our authority in Christ and we must use it. Satan knows he is a defeated foe but he still hasn't given up. We have battles to fight, but we must know that we fight in victory. The

land has been given, but we need to conquer and occupy it. We must engage the enemy in battle to enforce the Lordship of our Lord. With the help of our Lord, we are more than conquerors!

Conclusion

When we look at the familiar passage on spiritual warfare in Ephesians, we notice that every part of the body is protected apart from the back! Could this mean that there is no need for protection for the back because we are not expected to turn our backs to the enemy? We are encouraged to put on every piece of God's armour so we will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil.

As we engage in spiritual battle, our eyes must be fixed on the Lord Jesus, Our Commander-in-Chief. Victory is sure in the Lord Jesus. As we engage the enemy in battle let us pray that we will eventually echo the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians, ***"Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him."*** (2 Cor. 2:14)

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body." (2 Cor. 4:8-10)