

2 Corinthians 10:1-7:

Last Sunday, we considered Paul's answer to those that accused him of being carnal/motivated by the flesh in his ministry to the church @ Corinth. We focused on the personal application, for us to learn spiritual warfare, but the context of this passage was Paul exposing false teachers in the church, and a defense and vindication of his apostleship and ministry. As children of God: We do not (and must not) war carnally, we don't fight fire with fire, but we engage in spiritual conflict in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, with God's weapons: By His grace, in His Spirit, by God's strength, and with His Word!

In Christ, the "new you" ought to be pulling down and demolishing every remaining sinful stronghold from your mind, mortifying, and killing the "old you", meaning ALL your former sinful ways and attitudes!

And then, we must bring into captivity every thought to obedience to Christ, meaning, we must guard our minds, lock them down, not allow thoughts TO ENTER IN that would cause us to sin!

1 Peter 1:13, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24

But now to the context of this passage, in which Paul began to deal with false teachers who spoke against him and his ministry.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh"

We DO NOT engage in spiritual warfare (or the gospel ministry) by carnal means... So, brethren, you must know that wherever the gospel is preached, the enemies of Christ will revolt against it and those that preach it. False teachers will continue to corrupt the gospel of Christ by mixing their own doctrines, faulty opinions, and philosophies into it.

The weapons of our warfare (or the weapons of our ministry) are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Paul's primary weapons in this spiritual warfare were the gospel of Christ, preached with God's wisdom, and accompanied by God's Spirit and by God's power! These must be our weapons...HOW WE WAR!

1 Corinthians 1:18-25, Romans 1:15-17, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, 2:1-4, 13, Jeremiah 23:28-29

The Word of God was Paul's principal and most powerful weapon, but when he taught it and preached it, he knew it MUST BE accompanied by the power of God! It is the Sword of the Spirit of God!

Beloved, you must pick up this sword daily and learn it, exercise yourself in it, believe it, obey it as God's Word! If you don't, you would be able to fight the good fight of faith! Hebrews 4:12

Back to Paul's warfare at Corinth: There were strongholds in the church that needed to be demolished and pulled down.

These strongholds were false teachers, corrupters of God's truth, who were influencing the people away from Paul and the gospel to themselves.

"Of your own selves shall me arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them". 3

John...Diotrephes!

Corinth was in Greece, where the people prided themselves in worldly wisdom, godless philosophies, outward appearances, and enticing speeches. In their culture, if it didn't look and sound glorious outwardly, it couldn't be right! Do you remember what they said about Paul?

2 Corinthians 10:10: "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible"

It's clear that these false teachers had entrenched themselves in the church, and were "HOSTILE" against Paul and the gospel of Christ:

(V5): "They EXALTED THEMSELVES against the knowledge of God"

What you're reading here is Paul exercising his apostolic authority against them, to pull down their false teachings and cast them out of the church!

2 Corinthians 10:5-6: We're going to pull down your false teachings and cast down your lofty and high opinions of yourselves and bring into captivity EVERYONE'S thoughts in the church to be obedient to Christ! 2 Corinthians 11:3-4

The primary emphasis and mission of every New Testament Church MUST BE the gospel of Christ! Recall how Paul opened 1 Corinthians 1:10-11

This was serious enough that Paul would use his apostolic authority to punish these false teachers and bring the church back into obedience to Christ... from whence they had strayed!

From 2 Corinthians 10:7-18, Paul exposed these false teachers who had begun to negatively influence the church @ Corinth.

First: Worldly, Grecian, Corinthian culture had infected the church... they looked upon things externally, they despised Paul because of his outward appearance, because (in their opinion) his speaking skills were "contemptible and his bodily presence was weak".

He didn't LOOK THE PART!

Paul had previously dealt with those who "gloried in appearance, and not in heart". 2 Corinthians 5:12, 1 Samuel 16:7, John 7:24

Another characteristic of false teachers: Since they focus on outward appearances, they also trust in themselves! They were self-confident and not God confident!

(Verse 7B): If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's minister or messenger, let him of himself (or let him be

reminded) to think this again, that, as he is Christ's (minister), even so are we Christ's (ministers). Here is where Paul asserted his apostolic authority... NOTICE: (Verse 8): "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given to us, I SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED". 2 Corinthians 13:10

God has called us to edify and build up His church, not to destroy it!

2 Corinthians 10:9-11: Paul answered the accusation of the false teachers.

Their charge against Paul? He's bold when he writes but he's weak in person! 2 Corinthians 10:1-2. Paul's answer: 2 Corinthians 10:11

Paul could say this because his power and authority did not come from himself, but from God, given to him by Christ!

Another characteristic of these false teachers...2 Corinthians 10:12

Not only did they glory in appearance and trust in themselves, but they also commended themselves among themselves. They needed human approval, applause, praise, and attention...that is what motivated these false teachers. 2 Corinthians 2:17-3:2

But when the Lord Jesus Christ saved and called the Apostle Paul, it was the Spirit of God, "Who" motivated him in his ministry, coupled with the love of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:9-14, 10:17-18

Now you can better understand this past Wednesday's message on God receiving ALL the praise for the gospel ministry here @ GFBC!

Psalm 115:1

Finally: Paul did not boast of doing Christ's work where God had not called him. 2 Corinthians 10:13-16

God called and appointed us to preach the gospel to you... YOU are our AOR, our area of responsibility, you are our sphere of influence.

Bottom Line Up Front: Paul started the church at Corinth, Acts 18:8-11

We don't "overextend ourselves" and we don't try to take credit for other men's ministries; but that is what these false teachers did, they came to the church, which had already been established by Paul, they joined among them, and pressed themselves into leadership, and then they took credit for establishing the church.

2 Corinthians 10:15B: "But we have hope, that when your faith in increased, that we shall be enlarged by you, (or you will see that we are God's true messengers) sent to you to preach the gospel.

Beloved, THIS is gospel ministry warfare:

Our weapons (as a church) are not and MUST NOT BE carnal, but spiritual.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ may only be built upon God's Word, by His Spirit, and by His power. And when this

does happen, the gates of hell will come! But they will not prevail!

And then: We must not allow the culture of the world to enter the church! We must not glory in each other, or in outward appearances, we must not practice self-commendation or compare ourselves among ourselves, and we must not take credit or boast in someone else's Area of Responsibility.

2 Corinthians 10:17-18