

Christian Warfare

Lesson 4: All the Godly are Assaulted by Spiritual Enemies

We've been discussing the spiritual warfare carried on in the hearts of men between Satan, the strong man, and Christ, the Stronger One, Lk 11.20-22. We've looked *at the method* of Christ's attack upon Satan's palace in the heart of sinners *and the tactics* which Satan uses to—if God wills—defeat the success of that attack.

Now we want to consider 1) the *wiles* of Satan against Christ's palace in the heart of believers, Eph 6.11, and 2) the *armor* Christ has prepared for their defense and for making them fit to serve successfully under Him against the kingdom of darkness, Eph 6.14-18.

- I. When Paul tells us that, *as believers*, we're to put on the whole armor of God, he implies that *to be a believer is to be in combat*. To seek assurance of salvation in Christ and to endeavor to serve the Lord in a holy and Christian life, is to prepare ourselves for combat against those spiritual enemies of our salvation who would join forces against us as soon as we've given our names to God and taken up the profession of Christianity.
 - A. We see this in the example of God's children in Scripture.
 1. No sooner had *Abel* offered up an acceptable sacrifice to God, than Satan stirred up Cain against him.
 2. No sooner had *Moses* determined to be numbered among the Hebrews, than Pharaoh hotly pursued him.
 3. No sooner had *Israel* left Egypt to serve Jehovah than the devil stirred up Pharaoh against them.
 4. No sooner had *Saul of Tarsus* been joined to Christ than the devil sought to harass him with imprisonment, beating, stoning, etc., and at last a thorn in the flesh.
 5. No sooner had *Christ* been baptized than the devil met Him in the wilderness to tempt Him, raised up the religious leaders against Him, stirred up Judas to betray Him and Pilate to crucify Him.
 - B. Whoever resolves to be God's *servant* must reckon on being God's *soldier* as well. Like Nehemiah's followers, believers must do their work with one hand and hold their weapons with the other. For no sooner do we become God's friends, than we find ourselves Satan's enemies. No sooner do we receive the Lord's marching orders, than we find the devil advancing against us with secret treachery and outward force to supplant and overcome us.
- II. Two uses of this doctrine
 - A. Instruction for secure sinners.
 1. Sinners spend their time in a life of lust, uncleanness, and idleness as if there were no enemy to assault them and as if Satan were some meek lamb and not a roaring lion ready to devour them. They know nothing of combatting spiritual enemies and care nothing of traveling to a Land of Promise. Instead their wilderness of sin is their joy and delight. What's the cause of such blindness and carelessness?
 - a) If you ask them, they'll say they have a clear conscience and Satan doesn't bother them. Furthermore, they'll say the sad ones are believers who go on about temptations and mourn under the burden of sin.
 - b) But the truth is, no one's estate is as dangerous as those who are secure in a life of sin. They're grievously sick and have no sense of their disease. Their wounds are so mortal that they deprive them of all feeling. They're assaulted by Satan, prisoners of darkness

while they sleep soundly in a false security and are blind to their enemy's onslaught, 2Cor 4.3-4; cp. Pr 23.29-35. "Those are most assaulted who feel no assault."

- c) They're not the Lord's soldiers. They're the devil's slaves. Satan doesn't fight with them because they're his friends. There's never been a soldier of Christ who wasn't engaged in this fight and there was never a soldier so strong and formidable that Satan didn't engage with him. Indeed, he was not only so bold as to engage with Adam in his innocence, but he was so bold as to engage with Christ in His holiness.
 - d) Moreover, there's never been a soldier so constant in holiness that he wasn't approached by Satan to draw him out of the way either with baits of prosperity or threats of adversity. There's never been any who had the least spark of grace in him who wasn't assaulted by the devil trying to snuff it out, Gal 5.17; Rom 7.23.
2. The reason they live a life of ease is not because they're at peace with God, but because they're at peace with Satan, Isa 57.21; 28.14-15.
 - a) If a man never enters the field to fight against Satan and if he's content to be tied to the fetters of sin, then it's no wonder Satan doesn't rage against him. He's already a captive ready to do all the works of darkness to which he's tempted.
 - b) But if Christ is preached unto him and he's awakened with a desire for salvation, then Satan will never lose his service but by force. Neither can so strong a man be forced to give up his spoil but we're sure to feel the conflict. "When Christ comes to dispossess Satan, he'll never lose his possession without a fight, and we can't choose but feel the blows in so sharp an encounter."
 - c) And the reason they feel no fight between the flesh and the spirit is because their flesh wholly rules them and carries them like a flood into a sea of sin without any resistance. It's no wonder they feel no spiritual tug of war within, because the chief Combatant against sin, the living Spirit of God, has no residence in them. They are dead in sin.
- B. Consolation and encouragement for God's children.
1. It's no small comfort for the children of God that they continually feel the assaults of their spiritual enemies and continually see the breaches made in their souls by the devil's rage. Let us but remember that all God's servants are thus tempted and tried, Rev 12.17.
 2. We feel a conflict between our flesh and our spirit that carnal men don't feel because there's a living principle in us that they don't have, even the Spirit of life and holiness.
 3. So when we're tempted and assaulted by the devil, the world, and our corrupt flesh, it's a strong argument to persuade us that the devil knows us to be God's soldiers.
 4. Satan's kingdom isn't divided and neither does he war against his friends and servants, but only against those who wage war against him and fight under the Lord's banner.
 5. Therefore let all who feel the burden of their sins and are vexed with the continual assaults of their spiritual enemies, comfort and assure themselves that they are members of the Church Militant, friends of Christ, and children of God, Jn 15.18-21; 16.33.