



**Old Testament reading – Genesis 18:17-32 – New Testament Reading –
Matthew 18:15-35**

Spiritual Warfare: Fighting the Good Fight “Prepare Yourself for Battle” 1 Timothy 1:18-20

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

Once we know all we can know about our enemy, and once we’ve received our orders from the Commander and Chief as to where He wants us to go and what He wants us to do, the next step we must take is to prepare ourselves for a constant battle with Satan and the mighty forces of evil he has unleashed upon the world.

- While we will experience various times of discouragement, despair, and defeats, because of our faith in the finished work of Christ, i.e., His death and resurrection, the outcome of our warfare has already been decided, and our victory over sin, death, and the grave is already settled.
- Our victory is not in destroying our enemy, for he is already a defeated foe. Our victory is in building the Kingdom of God, one new believer at a time.

“The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with

Christ. As we embark upon discipleship, we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death. Thus, it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Two extreme concepts of the Christian Faith:

Militant Evangelicalism – those who personalize the spiritual war that exists between God and Satan and who fight against human enemies, whether actual or imagined.

- **Christian Reconstructionism** – the belief that our culture is divided into seven major categories: Government, Education, Church, Media, Arts and Entertainment, Business, and the Family.
 - Their goal is to achieve dominion over these seven areas by working to place Christians in positions of leadership rather than secularists, agnostics, or atheists.
 - Sadly, the two major organizations that began this movement have compromised their convictions regarding the essential doctrines of the Christian Faith and have lost their battle against Satan by default.
- **The Kingdom Now – Dominionism** – the belief that, when Satan deceived Adam and Eve, he “stole” the keys to the kingdom, but when Christ “gave the keys of the kingdom” to Peter, it was a sign that the call for him to have dominion had been restored.
 - Now, as they say, it is up to Christians to “take back” that which Satan stole; to claim dominion over the earth, subdue it for Christ, and then He will return as the King of Kings.
 - Proponents of the Kingdom Now do not believe in a literal rapture of the Church, nor in the restoration of the nation of Israel.

The theological errors of militant evangelicalism:

- Both views reduce the concept of God to that of an impersonal deity who was powerful enough to create the world and to set it in motion, but then He withdrew from the world, and now it is up to mankind to salvage it for God’s glory.
- Both views deny the sovereignty of God over the whole universe:
- Both views deny:
 - **God’s omnipotence** – that He is all-powerful!
 - **God’s omniscience** – that He is all-knowing!
 - **God’s omnipresence** – that He is ever-present and at all times.

- For any man or group of men to think they can do anything to accelerate, hesitate, or even frustrate the sovereign will of God is to act as Lucifer did before God expelled him from heaven.
- Christians are indwelt with the power of the Holy Spirit at the moment of their new birth, but that does not mean we are “little Christs” on a mission to “save the world.”
- The idea that the Church replaced Israel as God’s channel of blessings is unbiblical, for God’s promise to Abraham was to him and to his seed, and the fact that Israel exists today is the evidence that God will keep His promise.
- To deny the imminent rapture of the Church or Christ’s physical return to the earth is to deny the clear teachings of the Scriptures.
- To hate evil, to love mercy, to see that biblical principles are upheld and that justice is equal for all men is part of our calling. But to think by doing so we can “bring the kingdom of heaven to earth” is not only ludicrous, it is the epitome of spiritual pride.
- In our fight against the sins of our day, we must be careful not to change the priority of the Church from the clear proclamation of the gospel to the lost to a lesser goal of protecting our way of life.

Easy Believism – those who believe the Bible has many different interpretations, so there is no such thing as absolute truth or an absolute standard of morality. Therefore, everyone is free to do what is right in their own eyes.

- They believe God wants His people to be happy and healthy and enjoy all of His earthly blessings so they can leave this world, having achieved both fame and fortune.
- The contemporary concept of the Christian Faith promises the same things Satan promised Jesus if He would bow before him instead of going to the cross.
 - Satan tempted Jesus to use His deity to produce something to satisfy His hunger, rather than to trust God to provide it in His way, in His time, and according to His purpose. Easy-believism says it is okay to satisfy the lusts of the flesh.
 - Satan tempted Jesus to manipulate God to protect Him from death, and had He jumped from that pinnacle, Jesus would have sinned against God and disqualified Himself as the Messiah. Easy-believism says it is okay to satisfy the lust of the eyes.
 - Satan tempted Jesus to become the “King of the World” by bowing before him, rather than the Savior of the world the Father had sent Him to be. Easy-believism says it is okay to achieve the pride of life.

The image of God displayed by the militant evangelicals is just as ineffective in reaching the lost as the image displayed by the easy-believers, because neither of them focus on God’s redemptive nature.

- The militant evangelical ignores their need for redemption, so there is no effort to share the gospel with them.
- The easy-believers say there is no need for redemption, so there is no effort to share the gospel with them.

In 1 Timothy 1:18-19, the Apostle Paul described the tools Timothy must use to fight the good fight of spiritual warfare and to return the Church at Ephesus back to doctrinal integrity.

1. Hold to Your Faith – to believe what the Bible says about God.

- **About His Character** – Who He is and how His love for us was so great that He sent His only begotten Son to redeem us and to draw us into that right relationship with Him.
- **About His Attributes** – that His awesome power and control over all humanity is incomprehensible.
 - God is infinite – He has no boundaries or limits.
 - God is self-existent – He exists outside the created order.
 - God is eternal – He created “time” for His purposes.
 - God is self-sufficient – He has no need of anything/anyone.
- And yet, this gloriously incomprehensible God has revealed Himself to us through His written Word, through His Living Word, through the Holy Spirit Who indwells those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.
- In Psalm 33:11, the Bible says, *“The Lord’s plans stand firm forever. His intentions can never be shaken.”*

2. Have a Good Conscience – resolve to obey what God says to do, regardless of the consequences.

- When God speaks to us through His Word, and we know what He is telling us to do, the only way to maintain a good conscience before Him is to obey Him to the letter or expect a flood of guilt and convictions to follow.
- In James 4:17, the Bible says, *“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

Once a pattern of disobedience to God’s word is established, the person’s conscience is seared, and even though they may know what the right thing to do is, they will no longer have the resolve to do it. Romans 1:18-35