

Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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Our Weapons Are Not Carnal

In the June, 2013, *Message*, we wrote concerning conflict of spirits that we face every day – the onslaught of the enemy, Satan. If we live for the Lord Jesus Christ, we are involved in a war with Satan; we are soldiers chosen by our Captain, Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *[this]* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (II Tim 2.4).

Paul makes it clear the kind of weapons that are necessary and are available to us to defeat the enemy, even to pull down his strongholds. “For the weapons of our warfare *[are]* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (II Cor 10.4; also see Ephesians 6.13-18).

Let us look at some of the battles that God’s people have faced.

When the Israelites left the bondage of Egypt, in obedience to God’s instructions, they camped near the Red Sea (Ex 14.2-4). They had the sea on one side and the Egyptian army on the other. For the Israelites, it was an impossible situation – but not so for God; these were His people.

The Israelites trusted God and went forward as He rolled back the water of the sea. When the Egyptian army tried to follow, God took off their chariot wheels, slowing them enough to be caught and drowned when the Lord released the waters to flow back over the dry land.

Just as were the Israelites, we must be obedient to God’s instructions, even when it places us in an “impossible” situation and the world laughs at us and mocks us as they did Noah. A pure heart, total trust in the Lord, and obedience to Him are essential in the battle against the enemy for God to work on our behalf.

When Joshua and the Israelites were faced with crossing the Jordan River, what was required of them? Trust and faith in God and obedience to Him! The priests were told to “Step into the Water” and stand there holding the Ark of the Covenant as God performed a miracle and rolled back the waters.

Sometimes the Lord requires us to step into a situation in faith and trust and in obedience to His command – when our action seems foolish and dangerous. Our trust in God effects the power of God on our behalf. Time after time God’s people obeyed God’s commands when, to the natural mind, it seemed ludicrous:

fullness in Him can be found. Jesus said that he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled (Mt 5.6). In Him, and Him alone, we are complete.

Not all who know Jesus as their Savior will be willing to “crucify” the carnal nature and mature in the Lord; many will remain babes in Christ surviving on the milk of the Word, never strong in the power of the Word of God.

But there are those, willing to deny themselves, who will not be satisfied with less than the fullness of Christ living in them. These are they who will speak the Word of God with power and authority, who will, in the Name of Jesus, heal the sick, rebuke the evil spirits, and set the oppressed free (Mk 16.15-20).

These are they who will uphold, pray for, and encourage one another in the body of Christ. These are they who will tear down the strongholds of Satan. These are they who will declare and shew forth the preeminence of God’s Kingdom and the power of Jesus Christ.

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

Noah built an ark over a period of 120 years – when there had never been such a thing as water falling from the sky!

Moses went back to Pharaoh again and again and pronounced judgments (plagues) upon the Egyptians before God actually delivered the Israelites. I wonder if Moses ever felt embarrassed and foolish.

Joshua led thousands of the Israelites in a march around the city of Jericho every day for seven days and seven times on the seventh day – before the walls crumbled.

Jehoshaphat took the Israelite soldiers into a battle with a bunch of singers marching in front of them! (II Chr 20.16). (God inhabits the praises of His people! Ps 20.3)

If these leaders had not been obedient, the enemy would have defeated them. Disobedience would have cost them their lives.

God may not always require us to do what seems foolish, but He does require obedience. Obedience begins with surrendering our hearts to Him, accepting Him as Lord and Savior, and then living a godly life walking in the Spirit daily. We must first, and foremost, be a true follower of Jesus Christ, then – if we keep our hearts right and our lives pure and holy, if we are careful to trust and obey our Captain, **we have power and authority over the enemy in Jesus' Name**.

During the time of the apostles' ministry and the Early Church, Satan tried to prevent the spread of the Gospel – as he continues doing even today. Many of God's servants gave their lives, but the Gospel of the Kingdom of God spread and grew mightily, filling the whole earth. Not only were the apostles and many of those early believers obedient to the commands of the Lord, but they were so surrendered to Jesus Christ that they walked in oneness with Him – they in Him and He in them.

The apostles counted not their natural lives of value to themselves as compared to the importance of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. They spoke the Word of the Lord in such power and authority that Satan could not overthrow it – although he brought persecution and often death to God's servants. Their purpose in life was to give themselves totally to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of their faith, and the spreading of His love and His Word to all nations. They had a relationship with the Lord beyond salvation and forgiveness of sins; they died to their carnal nature that Christ might live in and through them in His fullness.

Paul suffered persecutions and hardships because he was obedient to the calling of Jesus Christ on his life. So obedient was he that he suffered death, in a measure through persecutions, without considering his own life. Jesus had told him "what great things he must suffer" for the Name of Jesus Christ; Paul went forth with abandonment to the world to fulfill his calling! Paul set his eyes on Jesus and the message of the Kingdom of God and saw nothing else!

Now, in these last days, more than ever before, we must be like the Apostle Paul and set our eyes upon Jesus Christ with a love that denies ourselves of any of our own will, a love that impels us to take up our cross and follow Him to death – if necessary (Lk 9.23).

We are instructed in Ephesians 6.10-18 to "be strong in the Lord and the power of His might." We are told to put on the whole armor of God, taking "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (v 17). The Word of God is our only offensive weapon against the attacks of Satan. The written Word of God is powerful, and the devil cannot stand against it. Jesus gave us an example in Matthew 4.1-11 as He quoted Scripture when Satan came to Him with temptations. The spoken Word is also an effective weapon with power and authority when the Holy Spirit speaks through us in the Name of Jesus; Satan is defeated – by the Word of God, the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

Stephen did not fight against flesh and blood although "flesh and blood" stoned him. He preached the Word, and his accusers were "cut to the heart" by the mighty Word of God (Acts 7.54).

Saints, we face the strongholds of Satan, and he is unleashing his forces with a vengeance against God's people; he knows his time is short. We do not fight against flesh and blood. Paul writes,

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *[places]* (Eph 6.12).

(For the weapons of our warfare *[are]* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (II Cor 10.4).

The world, including this nation, is serving other gods; it is wicked, perverse, as in the days of Noah. God has been longsuffering, but His mercy will not continue forever. His judgment is imminent; but in the midst of His judgment, He will have a remnant who will walk in His holiness and His power.

God will have a people, dead to their carnal nature and alive in Christ, who will go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. He is calling those who surrender all to Him to "come up higher" into His presence "and be there" as He had called Moses (Ex 24.12). He is forming a people after His image, with His nature, and, therefore, with the **power and authority of the Holy Spirit operating in and through them** as He did in the twelve disciples and the seventy when Jesus sent them out two by two – and with the same results. This power is available to those who are totally submitted to Jesus Christ and His will. Lord, help me to be among those!

Saints, are you hungry for more of the Lord? Do you have a longing, a deep yearning in your spirit, to **know Jesus** – intimately? Do not be afraid to surrender everything to Jesus, to His divine will; it is through Jesus only that peace and