

Weapons for Spiritual Warfare

Are you “war conscious”? Whenever a nation is engaged in war with another nation it is crucial for its citizens to develop war consciousness. Only if they are fully aware of the conflict and throw themselves into the use of their weapons will they win the war.

A first principle of successful warfare is to know one’s enemy, his strength and position. This is true in spiritual warfare as well. The apostles share their insights concerning the spiritual war and the devil. Paul wrote, “*We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness...*” (Eph. 6:12).

John relates that our conflict with Satan on earth is a result of the heavenly warfare between God and the devil. He calls the devil by several titles in Revelation 12: the Dragon, the Old Serpent, the Slanderer, the Devil, and the Accuser of the brethren. We face a real and terrible spiritual foe. Yet we can defeat him in our lives because he is a defeated foe. Christ Jesus, our Commander and King, has overcome him and we may share in His victory. Hear God’s promise to us: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.* (Romans 16:20)

Although Satan, whose fate is sealed, is an utterly defeated foe by our Lord Jesus, for God’s own purposes this defanged raging foe has power to do battle against believers in this interim period between Christ’s first and second advent. Such warfare is meant to develop us spiritually and gain Christ’s glory in us.

The primary activity of Satan that John focuses on in Revelation, Chapter 12, is his accusing the Christians: he is a slanderer of the children of God. He slanders them to God, to the world, to the believer himself, and to other believers. When a believer sins Satan is quick to point his transgression out to God. Toward the world he whispers that Christians are no different from

anyone else. His greatest slander is to the believer himself by mental arrows to cause the child of God to doubt the Father's continued love for his erring child. He tells us God will no longer accept us and that it is all worthless to strive to live to please him. Sometimes he motivates other believers in their own struggles to speak ill of another believer. Be aware of this enemy and his verbal and emotional abuse meant to keep us feeling defeated. Remember he is a liar and the father of lies. Because of the great victory of Jesus on our behalf we are not under his power. Instead, we can handle this powerful foe and defeat him through the use of some spiritual weapons God has placed at our disposal.

There are three keys or weapons to spiritual victory over Satan's lies and distortions First, there is the **judicial or legal weapon** "*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.*" They overcame because of the shedding of Christ's blood in death. The secret of spiritual victory is our union with Christ in His victorious death. By means of His cross Jesus bruised the Serpent's head and defeated him. Since we are united to Christ by vital faith we share in his victory.

There are two related meanings to victory through the blood of the Lamb. First, it signifies that in the cross the Lord Jesus met the worst that sin and evil could do and overcame it. *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*" (Colossians 2:15) At the cross Jesus the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) bruised the head of the serpent. How did he do this? Hebrews 2:14f says, *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.* Jesus' war against Satan and his spiritual entities was fought at the cross. The context of Colossians 2 speaks of the legal debt sinners are under. *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and*

authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by Him. (v.13-15) Jesus disarmed Satan by taking away his power to hold sinners to the debt of their sin and trespasses because he took the curse upon himself and paid it, thus wresting this weapon from Satan. The wages of sin is death and Jesus having entered into our death and rising to life on the third day has delivered us from its hold. The resurrection is proof of Christ's victory.

Second, through the voluntary, substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, sacrifice for sin has been made. When one unites to Christ in faith because of the blood of Christ, his sin is forgiven and wiped out. Since all our sins have been judged in Christ's death and we are forgiven, there is nothing left for Satan the accuser to accuse us with. We are declared righteous before God the Father. *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!* (Romans 3:21; 8:1; 5:9)

In addition, Christ's life was poured out in death that we might live before God. *For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life!* (Romans 5:10). Therefore, Satan's accusations cannot hurt us spiritually or affect our standing before God. Paul writes, *Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the One who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the One who died, but even more, has been raised; He also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.* Romans 8:33f

A second powerful weapon of spiritual victory is said to be the “**word of their testimony.**” This is **the evidential weapon.** Our testimony is centered in his death, followed by our word of witness to his living, powerful Word. This is referring both to the teaching of God's Word, and the sharing

of our own testimony of God's power and work in us, delivered in the power of the Spirit. This is a witness both to the power of the living Word of God, as well as a witness to His work within our hearts. What the apostle is referring to is the believer's confession of Christ and of Christ's work in him to the devil and before the world.

Hear the words of Paul to Timothy: "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time" 1 Timothy 6:12-15a.

"So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me His prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God."

"He has saved us and called us
with a holy calling,
not according to our works,
but according to His own purpose and grace,
which was given to us in Christ Jesus
before time began.
This has now been made evident
through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus,
who has abolished death
and has brought life and immortality to light
through the gospel."

"For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher, and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know the One I have believed in and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day" 2 Timothy 1:8-12.

Lastly, there is the weapon of **costly sacrifice**. “*They loved not their lives unto death*” (Rev. 12:11). In other words, in comparison to Christ and his gospel, their lives even offered in martyrdom was not too high a cost to pay. **To the Christian, his life is of secondary importance. What is primary is loyalty and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.** In the words of Paul to the Ephesian on the eve of his departure, *I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God* (Acts 20:24). Because of this mindset Paul continues in Romans 8: *Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

As it is written: Because of You we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! (Rom. 8:35-39).

This sacrificial giving of oneself to Christ’s kingdom, even when it results in death, is directedly related to the word of testimony. Our words are sterile if they are not connected to the way of the cross. Willingness to lay down our lives for Christ’s sake is a powerful weapon for spiritual victory.

They overcame Satan. They entered into Christ’s victory by faith in His all-conquering power. This is the secret of our victory: faith in the accomplishment of Christ ‘s cross, and whole-hearted commitment to the Savior.

Wayne Conrad
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