

# Battle Stations! • 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. WAR!

1. According to the most recent figures, there are over 60 local and regional wars being waged today
2. One would hope that with the increased power and influence of the United Nations, war would be a thing of the past
3. But in fact, with each year that passes, the number of conflicts increases
4. We hear about war in Sudan, or Bosnia, or one of several dozen other places
5. But they are all foreign names in far away places
6. Thank God we have peace here in the good old US of A!
7. I have news for you - we too are at war!
  - a. this morning, as we sit here, there is a war being waged all around us
  - b. it's a spiritual war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil
  - c. and though it takes place in the spiritual realm, it spills over into the physical
  - d. we see it in drug addiction and alcoholism, gangs and violence, crime and abuse

### B. Today

1. Paul writes of this spiritual war in our passage today
2. And he tells us what our role is and what we've been given to accomplish our mission

## II. TEXT

### A. Vs. 3-6

{3} For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

{4} For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

{5} casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

{6} and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

1. Beginning with verse 1 of this chapter, Paul contrasts himself with the false teachers who had come to Corinth
2. They were seeking to discredit him by saying that when he was there in Corinth he was meek and timid, but when he was away he puffed himself up and wrote bold letters he couldn't back up
3. They said that Paul was a little man who pretended to be someone important when in fact he was a nobody

4. These false teachers worked together and stood as a group
  - a. they affirmed each other's importance
  - b. they dressed themselves in regal garments
  - b. and made quite a show of their superior wisdom and powers in oratory
  - c. the outward appearance was very important to these men and they tried to impress the Corinthians with the external
5. Just like these men, there are some great religious personalities today who try to impress people with their abilities, their eloquence, and the demonstration of power
6. Paul writes and says that while he lived in the body, his life and ministry were not *focused* on the physical!
  - a. the body was for him but the *vehicle* for his soul & spirit
  - b. his *real* life, his *real* service for God and others was done in the power of the Spirit

### **B. V. 3**

**{3} For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.**

1. The word "war" means *to serve in a military campaign*
  2. Paul was not merely fighting an insignificant skirmish in Corinth
  3. This attack by the enemy was part of a larger satanic campaign
  4. The powers of hell were trying to destroy the work of God
  5. And Paul was determined not to yield one inch
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6. While you and I live in these bodies, *real* life is not limited to them
  7. We are spiritual beings who live in a dimension that transcends sight
  8. That dimension, the spiritual realm, is locked in a cosmic war that extends from one end of the heavens to the other
  9. It began over 6000 years ago in the Garden of Eden, and it will continue until the day when Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire at the end of the age
  10. The deciding battle of the war was fought at the Cross of Calvary; where Jesus Christ died for our sins
  11. As it says in Colossians 2, Jesus disarmed the powers of hell at the Cross
  12. Though they are in fact defeated, they haven't surrendered yet
    - a. the demonic realm struggles on, refusing to surrender
    - b. because of the wide field over which WWII was fought in the Pacific
    - c. there were a dozens of islands on which Japanese soldiers were stationed
    - d. at the end of the war, some of these soldiers and islands were forgotten
    - d. many of them continued to live as though they were still at war when in fact the war was over and their side had lost
    - f. and so it is with our spiritual enemies: their side has lost the war, but they continue to fight
  13. It's only a matter of time till Jesus comes and enforces His victory
  14. But in the mean time - Planet Earth is at war!
  15. As Jesus' followers, we have been enlisted in a military campaign of enforcing His victory on every "island" He sends us to
    - a. whether that's the island of Oxnard, or Camarillo, or Ventura, Ojai, Somis,

- Saticoy
  - b. Maneadero, Seattle, Frankfurt, Thailand, Germany, Vladivostok
  - c. Oxnard, Moorpark, Ventura College
  - d. Buena, Ventura, Oxnard, Shepherd, VCHS, Rio Mesa, Hueneme
  - e. WalMart, Costco, Circle K, Point Mugu, where ever!
16. And just as a soldier is given the gear necessary to accomplish the mission at hand, so God has given us the weapons we need to get the job done of pacifying Planet Earth and bringing it into submission to Christ

### **C. Vs. 4-5**

**{4} For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,**

**{5} casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,**

1. While the false teachers in Corinth were using flashy externals as the tools of their trade -
2. Paul's tools were *spiritual* - and they possessed the power needed to get the job done
3. Note carefully where Paul locates the *battleground* of spiritual warfare
  - a. he says that the weapons we've received are effective for
    - 1) pulling down strongholds
    - 2) for casting down arguments
    - 3) for casting down every high thing that exalts itself against the *knowledge of God*
    - 4) and for bringing every thought into captivity to Christ
  - b. the battleground of spiritual warfare is the *mind!*
4. There are walls of resistance in the minds of people
5. And these walls, like the walls of Jericho, must be pulled down if the kingdom of God is to advance
6. Paul describes these mental walls as:
  - a. *strongholds*
    - 1) this word speaks of a *fortified* building - a *castle*
    - 2) it's something that a person retreats to when attacked
    - 3) many are the mental castles that people have erected to resist the Spirit of God
    - 4) over the years they have built up *prejudices* and *hurts* that they quickly run to every time the Spirit begins to deal with them about their need of Jesus
    - 5) they run to the comfort of some past hurt, when they believe God let them down
    - 6) they retreat to some memory of when someone claiming to be a Christian blew their testimony and did something obviously wrong
    - 7) they find solace behind the walls of self-sufficiency and the false idea that trusting in Jesus is a sign of personal weakness
  - b. another mental wall is built of *arguments*

- 1) this word comes from the root meaning *to take an inventory*
- 2) it's the process of mental figuring - reasoning; of laying one idea after another until you arrives at a conclusion
- 3) the KJV translates it as *imaginings*; because as Paul uses it here, it means to think and decide without every considering God - without every factoring Him into the equation of life
- 4) when a person comes to the place where they decide to not only put off including God in their lives, but to out right *reject* Him, they develop a settled philosophy and argument against Him
- 5) I've met many of these people - and it is always difficult speaking with them because of the hardness of their hearts
- 6) they've come to a cold and calculated position of unbelief
- c. another mental wall is made of *haughty attitudes*
  - 1) Paul calls them, "high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God"
  - 2) "high thing" is a word which means something that gets elevated so that it becomes a barrier - literally, like a wall
  - 3) but in this case, it lifts *itself*
  - 4) Paul is referring to a haughty or prideful attitude that thinks it knows more than it does

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  - 5) we live in the age of the sound bite and the 30 second news feature
  - 6) news about important events is doled out in thin slices that are meant more to entertain than inform
  - 7) and as people read *less* and listen to the popular media *more*, they come away with a head full of politically correct positions on subjects ranging from the environment to nuclear proliferation
  - 8) they come to pre-packaged ideas and opinions, thinking they are their own, when in fact, they are merely spouting the opinions they've been programmed to hold
  - 9) I'm amazed how strongly some people feel about issues they know little to nothing about!
  - 10) and worst of all is their settled disposition and haughty attitude toward God, of whom they know nothing
  - 11) they have never sought Him, know nothing about Him, yet profess to know all and reject Him because he's not worth considering!
7. Paul says that the weapons God has given us are effective for dismantling these 3 walls
  - a. *pulling down* and *casting down* both speak of *demolition* -- of laying something low
  - b. I've had some friends who were in the Navy EOD - Explosive Ordinance & Demolition
    - 1) I've always thought what a cool job that would be
    - 2) every boy's dream - get to blow stuff up and not only not get in trouble, but get paid for it!
  - c. well guess what - as Christians, we are part of God's EOD squad
    - 1) we get to lay some powerful spiritual charges against the wall of mental

strongholds

- 2) we get to blow up godless arguments
- 3) we get to apply some spiritual C4 to attitudes of pride and self-righteousness
8. But just what are these weapons?
  - a. from what they do, we might think that they were great boldness
  - b. we might start thinking in terms of spiritual commandos with heavy packs, camouflage face paint, and shirt sleeves rolled back to expose big bulging biceps
  - c. spiritual GI Joes and Janes
9. We have an example of the way we are to wage spiritual warfare against the walls of the mind in the Battle of Jericho - and I think it's safe to say that this image played on Paul's mind as he wrote these words
10. Jericho was a stronghold, a fortress city and center of paganism in Canaan
  - a. it stood as an impregnable wall - barring Israel's entrance into the place of promise
  - b. the Jews feared it - and Joshua knew that the key to the conquest of the whole land was the effective destruction of the city
  - c. so one day, he went out by himself to plan a campaign against Jericho
  - d. as he stood at a distance and looked at the city, the Lord appeared to him and gave him the battle plan -- it was an unusual one
    - 1) rather than rush the walls with battering rams and siege towers
    - 2) they were going to march around the city, a safe distance away, where the archers on the wall could not hit them
    - 3) they were going to do this for 6 consecutive days - once each day
    - 4) then on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, they were going to march around Jericho 7 times,
    - 5) and on the 7<sup>th</sup> and last time the priests were to blow their trumpets -
    - 6) & when the people heard the trumpets, they were to shout with all their might
    - 7) God said that the walls would fall, and they would then take the city
  - e. can you imagine Joshua returning from this meeting with the Lord?
    - 1) as he returns to camp he calls for a meeting of his military leaders and the heads of the priests
    - 2) they all crowd into his tent, excited to hear what the plan of battle will be
    - 3) as he lays it out, they think - "Okay, Josh's been out in the sun too long!"
    - 4) is this some kind of a joke? Is he pulling their leg?
    - 5) no, he's serious - this is the plan of battle
  - f. a week later, the city of Jericho lies demolished
11. God had them follow this plan of battle because He wanted Israel to learn that their success depended on Him and His power, not their own
12. *Victory and success* in the *physical* realm is obtained by *faithfulness* in the *spiritual* realm
13. You and I are going to be successful and win the battle, not by becoming pumped up with some kind of self-inflated spiritual power
14. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; they are not of the flesh - they are God given spiritual weapons

15. We face the walls of unbelief every day
16. They are not going to be brought down by man-made programs & schemes
  - a. technology will not destroy them
  - b. busyness will not pull them off their foundations
  - c. slick presentations and flashy spectacles will not do the job
17. We need to use the weapons, the spiritual wrecking ball God has given
18. What is it God has given - what are the weapons of our warfare?
  - a. first, we have the Word of God--when it is learned and lived, it will cast down the arguments of man
  - b. then there is prayer--prevailing, consistent, fervent prayer that will demolish the walls of unbelief
  - c. we have the Holy Spirit who changes us from glory to glory, into the character of Jesus -this casts down the proud self-righteous attitudes of the lost
  - d. we have agape love--the undeserved, *unreserved* tough-minded love that will challenge and defeat prejudices
  - e. when we use these weapons, every thought will be brought captive to Jesus

#### **D. Not Cleverness But Simplicity**

1. Adolous Huxley is one of the best known agnostics of modern times
2. His rejection of Christianity was well know and he was a feared critic of the Faith
3. But one weekend, while visiting the home of some religious friends, he was invited to join them for church one Sunday morning
4. Huxley begged off and instead asked one of the other guests to stay home with him and to tell him why he believed in Jesus.
5. This man said, "Oh no - you, with your cleverness, will demolish anything I might say."
6. But Huxley replied, "I don't want to argue. I want you just to tell me what this means to you."
7. So the man, in the simplest terms, told from his heart what Jesus meant to him.
8. When he was finished, there were tears in Huxley's eyes
9. He said, "I would give my right hand if I could only believe that."
10. It wasn't clever arguments or a slick evangelistic formula that moved Huxley, it was the power of the Holy Spirit working through simple & sincere testimony of one of God's own

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. WWII**

1. During WWII our entire country went to war
2. It wasn't just the soldiers who went off to Europe, Africa, or the Pacific
3. The whole country went to war in terms of the war effort - It was called the "home front"
4. The factories formerly manned by young men were instead staffed by women
5. And every family across the nation participated in rationing so that the needed

resources for the production of critical equipment and supplies would be available

6. Women did without nylons, gasoline was rationed, sugar, butter, and rubber for tires were all on the ration list
7. And millions of homes would regularly take the grease from their bacon and sausage to collection centers for processing and conversion into the war effort
8. Even though the fighting was thousands of miles away, every American felt keenly the reality of being at war
9. And every citizen had a wartime mentality where they realized everything they did played into the result of which side would ultimately triumph
10. Every one of us who names the Name of Jesus needs to have a wartime mentality
11. We need to realize, that as citizens of the Kingdom of God, everything we do either advances or hinders the cause of Christ
12. Time is short - And our Captain is coming soon to lead us to the final victory
13. But in the meantime, while we wait, let's man our battle stations and faithfully use the weapons God has given

### **B. Prayer**

1. End with this: One of the most effective weapons God has given us is prayer
2. Yet it is one that we at Calvary Chapel have not used very well
3. There isn't much participation in prayer - and that's to our shame!
4. If we're to be effective in being a church of effective evangelism, then prayer needs to be more present
5. We have a solid ministry in the Word of God and in the Holy Spirit changing us into the image of Christ; but we are weak in prayer
6. We need to see the ministry of prayer become more evident
7. To that end, I will be giving a Sunday series on prayer soon
8. But don't wait till then to pray: T & Th / W / Sunday - 7:30 AM