

“Warfare & Authority”
2 Corinthians 10:1-18
1/30/22
Message 15

Introduction

- Title of the Message is: “Warfare & Authority”

- **Review**

- **Review Chapter 7**

- Paul deals with the struggle of confrontation

2 Corinthians 7:8–10 (NKJV)

8 *For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.*

9 *Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.*

10 *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

- **Review Chapter 8 – 9**

- Brought Up the Subject of Giving!!!
 - Context
 - A Special Offering for the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem
 - The Macedonians
 - Followed through on their commitment
 - Even in deep Struggles / Poverty
 - The Corinthians

- Failed – Needed to be Reminded
- We Learned
 - The OT teaches a Tithe
 - The NT teaches Principles

2 Corinthians 9:6–8 (NKJV)

6 *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

7 *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

• **Context to Chapter 10**

- **Paul will now DEFEND his Apostleship for the next 3 chapters**
 - He will Challenge
 - The Rebels in the church
 - The False teachers (The Judaizers)
 - He will encourage them to repent
 - Paul will NOT Mince words
 - As you read 2 Corinthians 10–13 there is NO Political Correctness taking place
 - He referred directly to his Accusers and answering their false charges.
 - (2 Cor. 10:7, 10–12; 11:4, 20–23)
 - He is NOT afraid to call it EVIL

- The Judaizers in the church are ministers of Satan who want to destroy the work of God
- (2 Cor. 11:12–15)
- As a Matter of Fact Some Believe because of the ABRUPT Change in TONE
 - That Chapter 10 - 13 are a part of another Book
 - That they were a part of the “severe letter” (2:4)
 - But I Don’t believe that to be the case
 - The best interpretation views 2 Corinthians as a unified letter
 - With chapters 1–9 addressed to the repentant majority
 - Chapters 10–13 to the minority still influenced by the false teachers.
- **What we can Learn From these Chapters**
 - There will be MANY Lessons
 - **1st God’s Work will ALWAYS BE and have Challenges –**
 - There will always be those who attempt to tear it down
 - This is Nothing new and will continue until Jesus Comes
 - We MUST expect it
 - *Leonard Ravenhill; “Why in God’s name do you expect to be accepted everywhere? How is it the world couldn’t get on with the holiest man that ever lived, and it can get on with you and me?”*

- Steven Lawson "The problem with preachers today is that no one wants to kill them anymore!"
- Steadman; "It's difficult to argue with evil. Falsehood is a fortress that aggressively defends itself. If you try to attack evil and error, expect to be wounded. Expect to have your character and reputation smeared. Expect to be interrupted, shouted down, and ridiculed. You will fight fairly because you are a Christian—but your enemy will cheat, lie, threaten, and attack you in ways you can't even imagine."

▪ 2nd Paul Leadership

- We Will see How to handle these Situations
- Meekness yet Boldness
- The AIM is always restoration – NOT REVENGE

▪ 3rd In Many ways the Same problem exist today

- The Struggle in The Church
- Not that Pastors today can stand with the same authority as Paul did
 - But the Conflict between pastors and congregation is still a very real problem
 - Today Pastors can Abuse their authority
 - Congregation can Abuse Pastors
- For the Record
 - I know a LOT of Pastors
 - A Lot of GOOD men - Yet NOT one Perfect

- Illustration – Like Parent a lot of Good one and only a few bad ones – most are trying to do their best
- Almost Ever Pastor that I know has had their Ministries challenged at some point and some many times
- Why They teach the Word –
 - It will go against the grain of our flesh – how will we handle it
 - Just like many of us at one time were upset with our parents...
- How To Handle
 - If Pastor are Abusing their Authority
 - God to them (Matthew 18)
 - Go to the Board
 - Go to Accountability pastors
 - If the Congregation is Abusing its pastor
 - Lee Grandy Writes Article in the table
 - *Sometimes Spiritual Warfare Isn't Demons—It's Other Christians*
 - *Those of us in the Spirit-filled community talk a lot about spiritual warfare, and we love to identify the demons behind every problem. But I've learned that we give demons too much credit. In many cases, "spiritual warfare" is actually caused by Christians who don't know how to love.*

- *It's true: Christians are guilty at times of gossip, slander, character assassination and other devilish activities that destroy people and churches. The devil and his demons may ultimately be behind it all, but carnal people are the devil's willing pawns. That's why Paul told the Galatians: "If you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal. 5:15, NASB)*
- *As we step into this new year, I challenge you to make it your goal to become a loving encourager. Here's how you can avoid being a tool of spiritual destruction:*

• **2 Powerful Truth's Paul Draws Out**

- Spiritual Warfare vs. 1-6
- Spiritual Authority vs. 7-18

Spiritual Warfare vs. 1-6

• **First: Paul's Appeal v. 1a**

- **1st Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you v. 1a**

2 Corinthians 10:1 (NKJV)

1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

▪ **Paul Pleading**

- Paul is NOT throwing around his authority
- He is actually pleading / begging the people who are HURTING him and the Work of the Gospel to repent
- **Paul will talk about his qualifications –**

- **BUT he does it in such a way to down play them to exalt Christ**

- **With Meekness =**

- The humble and gentle attitude that expresses itself in patient endurance of unfair treatment.
- A meek person is not bitter or angry, and he does not seek revenge when wronged

- **With Gentleness =**

- This is similar in meaning to meekness.
- When applied to someone in a position of authority it refers to leniency.
- Gentle people refuse to retaliate, even when it is in their power to do so (Phil. 4:5).

- **Following in Jesus' foot steps**

- True spiritual power is in “meekness and gentleness”
- NOT in “throwing weight around
- Jesus is the Example
 - Jesus has the POWER to wipe us out
 - But YET He is Meek and Gentle with us

- **How Does Paul Do this?**

- Filled with the Holy Spirit – really the ONLY way
- I Also Suggest...

- Paul Understands the BIG PICTURE – Focused on the Mission
- Remember Your Call
 - Paul was Called by God
- You Will be Persecuted –
 - So suck it up buttercup
 - People will always seek to tear down what God is doing (Yes sadly even some Christians)
- Keep the FOCUS on Christ and His Mission
 - Stay out of the mud of tearing people down
- Stay the Course –
- Teach God’s Word –
- Love them – Win the Lost
- Stay HUMBLE
 - His very attitude in these opening verses disarmed his opponents.
 - His use of his own name is significant
 - For Paul means “little”
- **2nd Their Accusations v. 1b**

2 Corinthians 10:1 (NKJV)

1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—**who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.**

▪ **The Problem People**

- Rebels
 - Those Who Did not like Paul
- Judaizers
 - Holding onto the Law for salvation

▪ **The Accusations**

- We will see Paul One by One Address many of them in the next 3 chapters
- 1st Paul wasn't a real apostle because he was not one of the 12
- 2nd Paul was very courageous when he wrote letters from a distance
- 3rd But very timid and even weak when he was present with the Corinthians (see also 2 Cor. 10:9–11).

▪ **Their Characteristics**

- The Judaizers
 - Were consistently overbearing in their attitudes
 - Always DRAWING / POINTING people to themselves
 - The people loved them (2 Cor. 11:20)
- Paul
 - Meek - Humble - Gentle

- Always POINTING people to JESUS – NOT HIMSELF

- Wiersbe; When Paul founded the church at Corinth, his purpose was to exalt Christ and not himself (1 Cor. 2:1–5). Christians usually grow the way they are born. If they are born in an atmosphere of dictatorial leadership, they grow up depending on man's wisdom and strength. If they are born in an atmosphere of humility and love, they learn to depend on the Lord. Paul wanted his converts to trust the Lord, and not the servant; so he deliberately "played down" his own authority and ability.

• **Second: Paul's Attitude vs. 2**

- **1st But I Beg you v. 2a**

2 Corinthians 10:2 (NKJV)

2 But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, *who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.*

- Again – From Pleading to Begging
 - Humility
- When I get there – I DON'T WANT to be BOLD
 - So please REPENT
 - So when I arrive we can have fellowship

- **2nd Who think of us as if walked according to the flesh v. 2b**

- This is another accusation made against Paul
- They said he was a man who walked according to the flesh.

- He is accused of this because of the perceived contradiction between his gentleness and his severity.

- **Third: Paul's Answer vs. 3-6**

- **1st For though we walk in the flesh v. 3**

2 Corinthians 10:3 (NKJV)

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

- Paul will Admits...
 - He walks according to the flesh **in the sense that we all do.**
 - He is a flesh and blood human being, and he struggles with the same things the Corinthian Christians struggled with.
- BUT our Battle
 - Paul wants to make it clear that he does not war according to the flesh.
 - *MacArthur; "Paul did not fight the spiritual battle for men's souls using human ingenuity, worldly wisdom, or clever methodologies (cf. 1 Cor. 1:17–25; 2:1–4). Such impotent weapons are powerless to free souls from the forces of darkness and bring them to maturity in Christ. They cannot successfully oppose satanic assaults on the gospel, such as those made by the false apostles at Corinth."*

- **2nd For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal v. 4a**

2 Corinthians 10:4 (NKJV)

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

- Context – The Corinthians

- The Corinthian Christians Because they were CARNAL
- Relied on and admire carnal weapons for the Christian battle:
 - Instead of the belt of truth
 - They fought with manipulation.
 - Instead of the breastplate of righteousness,
 - They fought with the image of success.
 - Instead of the shoes of the gospel
 - They fought with smooth words.
 - Instead of the shield of faith,
 - They fought with the perception of power.
 - Instead of the helmet of salvation
 - They fought with lording over authority.
 - Instead of the sword of the Spirit
 - They fought with human schemes and programs.
- **When Paul Fought**
 - His weapons were not material but spiritual, suited for spiritual war.
 - Ephesians 6, Paul lists the spiritual weapons he used:
 - The belt of truth,
 - The breastplate of righteousness,

- The shoes of the gospel,
- The shield of faith,
- The helmet of salvation,
- The sword of the Spirit.
- To rely on these weapons took faith in God instead of carnal methods.
 - But truly, these weapons are mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.
- **3rd But MIGHTY in God for Pulling down strongholds v. 4b**

2 Corinthians 10:4 (NKJV)

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

▪ **Physical Strongholds**

- The metaphor would be understandable to the Corinthians
- Since Corinth, like most ancient cities, had a fortress (on top of a hill South of the city) in which its residents could take refuge.

▪ **Spiritual Strongholds**

- Can't be defeated By Carnal Methods
- The Only Answer to these Spiritual Strong Holds
 - God's Word
 - Prayer
 - Living in Faith
 - Obedience
 - May not be flashy but it will win in the end

- Lesson

- My Concern for the modern church
 - Wants Flash = Carnal
- True Church = Not flashy - Stay the course
- **4th Casting Down Arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God v. 5a**

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV)

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,

- Context –

- Guzik; *“We must remind ourselves that Paul speaks to carnal, worldly thinking among Christians. He isn’t talking about the world here but the Corinthian Christians. They were the ones with the strongholds in their minds and hearts. They made the arguments against God’s mind and methods. They held on to every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. We miss it entirely if we think the love of manipulation, the image of success, smooth words, the perception of power, lording over authority, and human schemes and programs are just problems among unbelievers. Paul dealt with this heart and mind in the church.”*
- They want to debate God, saying they have a better way.
- They exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.
- They think of themselves as smarter, more sophisticated, more effective, more powerful than God’s ways.
- Carnal, worldly minds think they know more than God does!

- **The Spiritual Weapons Cast these IDEAS where they Belong**

- The Word of God exposes them to be what they really are FAKE

- **5th Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ v. 5b**

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV)

*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,***

- **The Christians in Corinth**

- Needed to Bring every thought in to captivity
- Repent from their CARNAL ways
- Stop Fighting against God's WORD
- Stop Doubting Paul's Authority

- **Lesson: The Way to Victory**

- Bring EVERY thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!!!
- This is where the battle starts = In the MIND
- What we think on becomes what we will be!!!
- The Answer God's Word

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- We MUST BE IN THE WORD OF GOD
- Time for a VERY hard and HONEST question
 - HOW much time do you spend in the Word of God Each day?
- **6th And being ready to punish all disobedience v. 6**

2 Corinthians 10:6 (NKJV)

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

- Paul was ready to confront the Corinthian Christians and to pull down the strongholds among them if they would not do it themselves
- Paul is meek and gentle
 - BUT he would not stand idly by while enemies of the faith assaulted a church under his care.
 - He was ready to purge them out (as he did at Ephesus; 1 Tim. 1:19, 20)

Spiritual Authority vs. 7-18

• First: Paul Addresses Outward Appearance v. 7

- **1st Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? V. 7a**

2 Corinthians 10:7 (NKJV)

7 Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.

- **Paul diagnoses the problem with the Corinthian troublemakers.**
 - They are looking only at the outward appearances, and by outward appearances, Paul was weak and unimpressive.
 - It's all about strength, beauty, personality, Intelligence. etc...
- **Note: This is a description of Paul from an early Christian writing, perhaps from about the year 200:**
 - *"A man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked."* (Cited in Kruse)

Isaiah 53:2 (NKJV)

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

- **Lesson**

- It is way past time the church repents of looking on the outward and begins to focus on the inward character
- **2nd Just as he is Christ's, so we are Christ's v. 7b**

2 Corinthians 10:7 (NKJV)

*7 Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? **If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.***

- Paul is saying = If you claim to belong to Jesus, look at yourself.

- **Second: Paul's Aim v. 8**

- **1st Even if I should boast somewhat more v. 8a**

2 Corinthians 10:8 (NKJV)

8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—

- It seems that Paul is uncomfortable writing about his own authority.
 - This is because he is a humble, godly man.
 - He uses boast here in an exaggerated
 - Almost sarcastic sense to show he would prefer not to talk about his own authority; it feels like “boasting” to him.
 - Paul realizes how much better it would be if the Corinthian Christians would just recognize his authority so that he wouldn’t have to boast somewhat more about it.
- **2nd Which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction v. 8b**

2 Corinthians 10:8 (NKJV)

8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—

- Jesus grants authority in the church for one reason.
 - He does it to build the body of believers up (edification), not to tear it down (destruction).
- NOTE AGAIN The difference between Paul and the Judaizers
 - Paul used his authority to build up the church
 - The Judaizers used the church to build up their authority.

• **Third: Paul’s Adversaries vs. 9-11**

2 Corinthians 10:9–11 (NKJV)

9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters.

10 “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.”

11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

○ **1st Lest I seem to terrify you by letters**

- The false apostles had accused Paul of being an abusive leader
- Trying to intimidate the Corinthians in his letters (such as the “severe letter,” see Introduction: Background and Setting).
- Paul’s goal, however, was not to terrify the Corinthians, but to bring them to repentance (cf. 7:9, 10), because he loved them (cf. 7:2, 3; 11:11; 12:15).

○ **2nd Let such a person consider this:**

- AKA = “If you want the ‘tough’ Paul, you will get him.
- I will come to you with all the authority I have shown in my letters
- If the Corinthian Christians knew how serious Paul was, they would have received this as a solemn warning.

• **Fourth: Paul’s Advice on How to Avoid The Echo Chamber v. 12**

2 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV)

12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

○ **1st We dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves:**

- Paul critics thought highly of themselves.

- **2nd Measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves:**

- This explains why Paul's carnal Corinthian critics could think so highly of themselves.

- **3rd Are not wise:**

- It isn't smart. It isn't of God

- **4th Lesson**

- Modern Term: An Echo Chamber

- *Means: It is "an environment where a person only encounters information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own."*

- We See this everywhere today

- Politics
- Media
- Business world
- Sadly yes even the church

- Solution = God's Word – This will keep you going in the right direction

- **Fifth: Paul's Appointed Sphere By God vs. 13-16**

2 Corinthians 10:13–16 (NKJV)

13 *We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.*

14 *For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;*

15 *not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere,*

16 *to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.*

- **1st Within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us:**
 - Paul's authority in the church was not unlimited.
 - God had granted him a sphere of authority, and that sphere included the Corinthian Christians
 - Especially since he had founded that church (for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ).
 - All godly authority has a sphere.
 - It is important for the person in authority to not exercise that authority outside the sphere, and it is important for the person under authority to recognize the sphere of authority they are under.
- **2nd As your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere:**
 - As the Corinthian Christians grew in maturity and in outreach, their church would grow and plant many other churches.
 - This would, by extension, enlarge Paul's sphere of authority.
- **3rd In other men's labors... not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment:**
 - Why is Paul stressing the point that he has not, and will not, take authority in another man's sphere?
 - Probably because that is exactly what his opponents among the Corinthian Christians did.
 - They tried to boast in Paul's sphere of accomplishment.
 - Illustration
 - CCA – Calvinist

• **Sixth: Paul's Approval Comes From God vs. 17-18**

2 Corinthians 10:17–18 (NKJV)

17 But “he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”

18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

○ **1st He who glories, let him glory in the LORD:**

- By using this quotation from Jeremiah 9:24

Jeremiah 9:24 (NKJV)

24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD.

- Paul rebukes the Corinthian Christians who found their glory either in Paul or against Paul.
 - Paul sweeps all that away, showing we should not glory in ourselves, in another, or against another –
 - We should only glory in the LORD.
- **2nd For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends:**
- It doesn't matter how you testify about your own accomplishments.
 - It is what God says about us that matters and will endure.

Closing

- May we ALL keep our Focus on God -