



Introduction

The previous lectures discussed the coexistence of two worlds, the natural earthly world and the heavenly world. The natural earthly world is ruled by earthly government systems. The heavenly world, on the other hand, is occupied by two kingdoms: Satan's and God's kingdom. Satan and his fallen angels are constantly fighting against God's people in order to captivate them under their authority. Thus, God's children need all the time to be armored with both offensive and defensive weapons in order to be victorious against Satan. St. Paul's advice to Timothy, *"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare"* (1 Timothy 1:18). Also *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses"* (1 Timothy 6:12). *"Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air"* (1 Corinthians 9:26). Most, if not all, of the offensive weapons are also defensive.

Some Offensive Weapons

The goal behind using offensive weapons is

"...pulling down strongholds, 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" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Thus we attack Satan in his territory and advance and release others from Satan's captivity.

1. Prayer

In prayer we intercede and ask the Holy Spirit to intervene for others that they may overcome and defeat Satan. The early church knew the power of prayer and continued to pray. During St. Peter's imprisonment, the church assembled for prayer and had him released from Herod's captivity. Likewise, during recent attacks on churches in Egypt, Christ's body all over the world assembled for vigils in prayer and this is the attitude and concept of the church.

There are three levels of prayer:

- a. Asking and immediately receiving an answer to the prayer request.
- b. Seeking but not getting an immediate answer.
We, for a purpose, must continue to seek.
Example, the apostles continued to seek the Holy Spirit for 10 days and finally received Him.
- c. Knocking signifies persistence in prayer. Our Lord stressed the importance of persistent

knocking prayer as in the parable of the unjust judge and the widow (Luke 18:1-8).

There are five types of prayer:

1. Supplication: asking one specific thing from God, for example, asking for mercy, forgiveness.
2. Communication: prayer should also be communication with God and not always simply asking him for what you want.
3. Intercession: asking for others, an offensive weapon.
4. Thanksgiving: thanking God for you or for the church.
5. Praise: the highest level of prayer, praising God for WHO GOD IS - not necessarily for something He has done.

2. Sword of the Spirit

The sword of the Spirit, both a defensive weapon to fight temptations and an offensive weapon to preach it, is the Word of God. St. Paul describes the word of God: *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is the truth and will expose the lies of Satan and defeat him because Satan is a liar and father of all

liars. Satan will dare use the Word of God to deceive us. When tempted by Satan, our Lord answered, "It is written..." using the Word of God to defeat him (Matthew 4). Caution must be taken against using verses in isolation. We need to study the word of God, hide it in our hearts and live by it.

3. The Mind of Christ

Renewal of the mind is acquiring the mind of Christ (Romans 12:2). Acquiring, carrying and shielding ourselves with the mind of Christ is a strong armor.

"But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). *"As Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourself also with the same mind"* (1 Peter 4:1).

Christ wants to destroy the works of the devil and we have to have this same mind. When Christ saw the devil expanding and His sheep without a shepherd, He became anxious and went to the mountain and spent the whole night in prayer and the next day He chose twelve men and appointed them apostles to release the people from Satan's bondage. Servants must have this same anxiety for the return of all sheep to Christ. We should not even be comfortable nor settle with 99% attendance. We should go and search for that one lost sheep, and to want EVERYBODY to return to Christ and pray for the entire world to know Christ. St. Paul had this same anxiety which turned into action, *"Who is weak, and I am not*

weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?" (2 Corinthians 11:29). Moses is another great example of a leader anxious for his people. While accepting God's punishment of not entering the Promised Land because of hitting the rock twice, he asked God to appoint a leader who would lead them instead of him.

4. The Church's authority

The authority of "binding and loosening" that God gave to priests through the sacraments; *"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 16:19). In confession the priest prays the absolution thus loosening us from the enemy's bondage and absolving us from having submitted ourselves to Satan.

5. The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ

Communion is a powerfully defensive and offensive weapon. *"They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb"* (Revelation 12:11). The blood of Christ scares Satan off just as the blood of the lamb prevented the angel of death in the Old testament from entering the houses of the Israelites. By taking communion and washing ourselves in the blood we protect ourselves and can also defeat Satan (offensive).

6. The Word of Testimony

Bearing witness to the work of Christ in us is an offensive weapon. St. Paul said "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes*" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Resurrection is a reality which we remember, perpetuate, live by, and witness its changing force working in us.

7. The Name of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord's name is both defensive and offensive weapon. "*In My name they will cast out demons*" (Mark 16:17). The Psalms mostly speak about the name of the Lord and its power. "The name of the Lord is like a shielded tower". The church adds to the Lord's Prayer - "In Christ Jesus our Lord" - because Christ said "*Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full*" (John 15:24).

Satan's Strategies

Satan uses two major strategies against us:

- Through the world. Satan is the prince of this world (Revelation 20:3,7) deceiving individuals and nations. What is more dangerous is that he can transform himself to an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14,15). For example, he presents a pleasant face and easy teachings to the young

generations in the form of atheistic theories and acceptable magic products (eg. Harry Potter). We should be able to expose the wickedness of Satan by becoming knowledgeable in the field of Apologetics in order to destroy the spirit of the antichrist. Satan is behind the general feeling of Anti-Christ in the world. There is a general spirit against Christ and against Christians in the world.

- Through the flesh. When Satan fails to blind our mind he will begin to use our own flesh to attack us (mind and spirit) - "*...abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul*" (1 Peter 2:11). Satan uses the flesh to confuse the mind in Romans 7:23. Satan uses the flesh to war against the mind to bring people into captivity He uses the flesh to bring corruption "*...the flesh reaps corruption...*" (Galatians 6:8).

Conclusion

We are in a continuous warfare with Satan. It is true that ultimate victory in Christ is ours but this does not mean that we lay back and wish for victory. We have to put on the armor of God constantly, be aware of Satan's tricks and cautious lest we drift away through his strategic snares.

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