

The Christian Wages War

Intro:

Over 230 years ago the forefathers of our country determined that there was a time for war. When the scepter of tyranny became too oppressive they penned these words:

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

My fellow Christians, we too are in a war; a truth war, where there are skirmishes over what is real and true and where biblical words are defined and redefined as people seek to justify their good and their bad. This war is in the church. Yes, in the church, as those who appear to speak gloriously wonderful words are, in truth, leading many astray from the cross of Jesus Christ in the name of holiness, salvation, love, acceptance, and righteousness. At the core, they deny that Jesus is Lord or that His death on the cross was either adequate or necessary for salvation. To these men and women, Scripture says, we must stand up and fight with the proclamation of the truth of Jesus Christ, but not by sword or gun, by bombs or in bloodshed. In the words of Charles Spurgeon:

“The Church of Christ is continually represented under the figure of an army; yet its Captain is the Prince of Peace; its object is the establishment of peace, and its soldiers are men of a peaceful disposition. The spirit of war is at the extremely opposite point to the spirit of the gospel. Yet, nevertheless, the church on earth has, and until the second advent must be, the church militant, the church armed, the church warring, the church conquering. How can this be? It is in the very order of things that so it must be. Truth could not be truth in this world if it were not a warring thing, and we should at once suspect that it were not true if error were friends with it. The spotless purity of truth must always be at war with the blackness of heresy and lies.”

As we enter this week of celebrating our country’s Independence Day, may we remember the war that we are in for the minds of our people, and may we prepare in the attitude of the Christ and in His revealed knowledge to defend the truth of the gospel in the face of the twin evils of legalism and licentiousness.

1. Living Like Jesus and Proclaiming the Gospel Will Make You Appear Weak

- a. “Weak” to the Religious
 - i. walking according to the flesh" is living with one's mind set on fleshly (worldly, sinful, merely temporal) things (see Romans 8:3-7) that are hostile and disobedient to God.
 - ii. set on fleshly things – the accusers thought that Paul set his mind on fleshly things (most likely as Paul considered that they did as well, see v12)
 1. deception (2 Cor 1:17)
 2. man's will (Gal 4)
 3. “big sins” vs. “little sins” of Religious Spirituality

- b. “Weak” to the Irreligious
 - i. The flesh is also used of outward and external (physical) things, of which Paul was considered “weak” (v10)
 - ii. Inconsequential and foolish in the eyes of the world
 - 1. See no need for complete redemption, especially by grace alone
 - a. Emergent Church movement
 - b. Liberal Church/Mainstream Church
 - 2. 1 Cor 1:18
 - 3. 1 Cor 2:14
 - 4. 1 Cor 4:10
- c. The opposition was claiming that they were “more spiritual” than Paul and the he was merely “fleshly” in his Gospel
 - i. Interestingly, they compare themselves with one another (v12)
 - ii. Paul and his associates will not wage war in the manner of the flesh (physically, hostile, disobedient to God, deceptively, or according to their own desires and will)
 - iii. He enters into his argument

2. Christians Fight Campaigns in the War of Truth

- a. -this war was not physical
 - i. -contention of proclaiming Truth in face of erroneous or deceptive proclamations
 - ii. -NOT like “martyrs” today, who kill for their “truth” rather than simply die rather than deny Truth
 - iii. -History is filled with true martyrs, who die while contending in their words, deeds, and worship, those who would give up their lives rather than deny the proclamation of what is true
- b. -this war is a spiritual battle taking place in the naos, or the minds of people
 - i. -Paul battles against that which “sets itself up” against the “knowledge” of God
 - 1. Knowledge, that which is knowable and known
 - 2. Some today want to say that we cannot know God, we cannot know Truth, we cannot even really know anything
 - ii. where **prayer** becomes the walkie-talkie for what we need from the General on the frontlines of the battlefield, rather than the intercom where we call down to the kitchen for more comforts in the den (John Piper).
 - iii. where the **Scriptures** become our offense in the power of the Spirit and give victory over deception and falsehood and lead us into the knowledge of God
- c. -It is a battle for Truth, particularly of the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - i. -John 8:32
 - ii. -2 Thess 2:10, “loving the Truth” is a delineating mark of a Christian
 - iii. -1 Tim 3:15, The Church is the “pillar and the supporter of the Truth”

3. Christians’ Weapons of Truth are “powerful in God”

- a. Weapon of Truth: That Which Leads to the Knowledge of God, which reveals Him
- b. Weapon of God’s Armor (Eph 6:10-20)
 - i. Girded Loins with Truth
 - ii. Breastplate of Righteousness
 - iii. Boots of the Gospel of Peace
 - iv. Shield of Faith
 - v. Helmet of Salvation
 - vi. Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God
 - vii. Walkie-Talkie of Prayer
- c. Truth begins in God and is revealed by God as He revealed Himself

- i. Ps 111:10, the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom
- ii. Rev 15:3, Just and True are Your Ways King of the Ages
- iii. Ps 19:7-11, The Word of the LORD is altogether true, dependable, and sweet
- iv. Ps 117:2, The Truth of the LORD is everlasting
- v. John 3:21, the one practicing truth comes to light in order to reveal God's work
- vi. John 8:39-40, Jesus reveals the truth, which comes from God v44, Satan does not stand in the truth
- vii. John 14:6, Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father
- viii. John 16:13, the HS guides believers into all the truth
- ix. John 17:17, God sets His people apart in Truth by His Word
- x. John 18:37, Jesus came to testify to the Truth, and every believer hears and knows it

d. for the purpose of tearing down (noun – destruction)

- i. -strongholds = lofty arguments raised up against the knowledge of God
- ii. (see the military chiasm) – all define “destruction” in this campaign
- iii. pulling down the raised up and lofty fortresses of speculation
 - 1. Rom 1:18, 25 unbelievers (ourselves once included) suppress the truth and gain God's wrath, the fall of man is linked to the exchange of Truth for a lie
 - 2. Rom 2:20, the Word of the LORD embodies Truth, but unbelievers will not obey
 - 3. Presently,
 - a. the cultural worldview that has snuck into the church and been accepted as authoritative is that science guides our authoritative truth (liberal view that miracles don't happen)
 - i. Science is our Western world's religion and scientists are its trusted priests, its gatekeepers of knowledge and “truth”
 - ii. Different than the scientific method, which is useful, “science” as a worldview of truth is thought to be necessary to understanding all things, including the spiritual
 - b. Spiritualism
 - i. One cannot know Truth, but must simply live to what he knows: this defines spirituality
 - ii. Emergent church and its emphasis on community and the unknowable, but devoid of Christ and His Cross as the basis of salvation
 - 1. Salvation in the emergent church is really a new legalism tied to social justice and powerless “spirituality”
 - 2. Be careful in chasing obedience (social justice) not to substitute it for the Cross of Jesus Christ
 - 3. “The fact is that the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse—a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith. Deeper than that, however, is that such a concept stands in total contradiction to the statement: ‘God is love’. If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil.” (Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003], pp. 182-183)
 - 4. The cross remains a stumbling block under the guise of the beautiful word of “love.”

5. The point of the cross, however, is the depth of God's love, not in mere example, but in power!!
- e. taking captive the thoughts against God to obedience of Christ
 - i. Gal 2:5, will not bow to opposition so that the Truth of the gospel remains
 - ii. Gal 5:7, Galatians was written because someone had hindered them from obeying the truth
 - iii. The Truth of God's revelation is to be obeyed
 1. -make them obedient to Christ (purpose and standard for success)
 2. -Matthew 28:19-20 "keep all that I have commanded you..."
 3. -2 Thess 2:13, salvation comes from believing the Truth
 - iv. It is to this purpose that our thoughts against God are taken captive by the Truth of the Gospel
 1. There is an inward violence that comes with Truth, a wrestling with God and a freedom from enslavement to sin
 2. It is to this purpose that Paul and others work: to free believers from the lies of Satan, idols, and the world into the line of those taken captive by Jesus in obedience to His Gospel
 - f. being ready to avenge disobedience
 - i. 2 Tim 3:8, some men oppose the truth and are rejected in the faith
 - ii. Gal 2:14, Paul rebuked Peter for not being inline with the Truth of the gospel
 - iii. 2 Thess 2:12, truth is set against unrighteousness, which deserves judgment
 - iv. 1 Tim 6:3-5, some preach doctrine against Christ and are devoid of truth
 1. NOT any disagreement with others in the church, but rather with those who preach a different Jesus, a different gospel, heresy at its core has to do with a perversion of Jesus and His cross from the Words of Scripture
 - g. for building up (v8) believers
 - i. Paul encourages the Corinthian believers that he is not trying to scare them or destroy them, but rather to build them up stronger in dependence upon Jesus
 - ii. 1 Cor 13:6, Love rejoices in the truth
 - iii. **2 Cor 13:8**, Paul works for the Truth, not against it, for the strength of the Corinthians
 - iv. Eph 4:11-16, leaders are gifted to build up the body of Christ in the image of Jesus by speaking the truth in love
 - v. Eph 4:24, the "new self" is renewed in the holiness of the truth
 - vi. 2 Tim 2:25, repentance leading to the knowledge of the Truth
 - vii. Titus 1:1, Paul writes for the faith of the chosen and their knowledge of the Truth

Conclusion:

We are living in an age where Truth is only accepted as long as it "fits my mould." I judge what is and what isn't true. The danger in the church is that many deceivers are using biblical words and redefining them to mean something that they do not mean. They rob us of Jesus and His glorious cross, His redemptive sacrifice, and ultimately they rob many of salvation. The result of silence on our part, for the perceived sake of "peace" is that God is not worshipped or glorified for how great He is, but rather a man-made image of our limited wisdom is lifted up to be worshipped, and many go to the destruction of the wrath of God because of these deceptions and our silence. We do not defend God because He needs us, but rather because He is true and because the gospel must be proclaimed in truth. How will they know if we do not tell them? For this reason, false teaching must be torn down, destroyed, and overthrown by the Truth of God's own revelation of Himself in His Word.

My friends, beware the evil men, the doers of Satan's work, who disguise themselves as messengers of light (just as Satan does). The bottom line: Jesus and His Substitutionary Death on the Cross. The gospel is this: I am so sinful that by God's wrath I deserve to die...AND...God loves me so much that Jesus died in my place. Repent of your sins, your

efforts to save yourselves by works, and trust completely in the One who died in your place. This the true power of God's love.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **(2 Timothy 3:12-15)**