

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Spiritual Warfare Within the Church
2 Corinthians 10

Last time...how a healthy Body functions

Being a ready and willing stewards of God's things for the benefit of others in need

The Royal Law in action

The Body of Christ acting in one accord with the Head of the Body

This time...how an unhealthy Body dysfunctions – spiritual warfare within the Church

2 Cor 10

Backdrop/Context:

The Apostle Paul had a difficult and sometimes contentious relationship with this fellowship of saints he loved so dearly

Many in the church were very critical of him and challenged his authority as an Apostle

The primary source of this criticism of and conflict with Paul came from false teachers and false apostles that had invaded this church

The city was like Las Vegas – very materially prosperous “sin city” so it was a draw for the carnally minded

The results of these false teachers were

- the very first issue addressed by the Holy Spirit thru the Apostle Paul – divisions destroying the unity of the Body

1 Cor 1:10-17

- carnality brought on by false teachings

1 Cor 3:1-3

As will Paul warn the Ephesian elders of dangers within the church

(Acts 20:28-30), so those dangers existed in the Corinthian church...

and they exist to this day

- grievous wolves enter in, not sparing the flock of God
- speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves

Paul now reaffirms his authority as an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God

His motive: the love of a father for his children and of a shepherd of the sheep

v1-2 Paul personally beseeches...exhorts and alerts...the saints in Corinth that,
with the meekness/humility and gentleness of Christ,
he is going to with boldness/confidence/courage confront his slanderous adversaries
within the Church who are dividing the Church

As Jesus confronted His adversaries...the chief priests and the scribes and the Pharisees
and the Sadducees

It is possible...it is Christ-like...to confront the enemies of the Cross within the Church
with meekness, gentleness, AND boldness
Spiritual warfare within the Church is very much real

v3-5 Whether spiritual warfare is within the Church or attacking the Church from the outside,
we are not helpless

We are soldiers

2 Tim 2:1-4

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to **faithful** men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth **entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life**; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

We have been equipped with weapons and armor...spiritual weapons and armor for
spiritual battle

Eph 6:10-18

Our weapons are mighty through God to

- destroy spiritual strongholds..."Jerichos"
 - without
 - Washington DC and state capitals
 - Entertainment centers like Hollywood and Disney
 - Media outlets
 - the Abortion industry
 - within
 - the Abortion industry
 - False gospels
 - Heresies

1 Cor 11:18-19

2 Peter 2:1-3 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many

shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you

- destroy imaginations/reasonings and every wrong-mindedness that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (Ps 19:1-4)
 - secularism and humanism that have removed God from our schools, universities, Gov'ts, and courts (Rom 1:20-22)
 - LGBTQ+ agenda that pervades society and has corrupted the Church
 - theistic evolution in churches that compromises the Word of God's creation account and Young Earth with the theory (is not science) of Evolution
 - the false gospels, the ear-tickling, and the COEXIST ecumenicalism that have perverted the true Gospel and the words of the Living God (Is 30:8-15)
 - Replacement Theology that has called God a liar
- take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ, right-mindedness... the battlefield is the mind (Rom 12:1)

Paul knew he was in a spiritual battle, to be fought with meekness and gentleness and boldness using spiritual weapons

He knew the issue was NOT his stature or voice or personality, that were being attacked
He knew who was behind all the attacks – the devil

He understood the wiles/tricks of the devil – to destroy and distract and confuse and corrupt the Body of Christ

We must know we are in a spiritual battle...in Christianity and in the nation

Politics has no answers for the depravity in man-kind's heart

Politics is NOT one of our weapons!

Politics is pro-abortion i.e. both Democrats and Republicans

Politics is not the solution to turn back the tidal wave of LGBTQ+...

There is no turning back from a reprobate mind apart from God (Rom 1:26-28)

Christian nationalism is NOT the goal, saving souls from eternal death is

Politics is not the battlefield, the mind of individuals is

With spiritual discernment, we

- use the weapons God has given us to fight the battle raging all around us
- know who is and who is not the enemy
- engage in search and rescue missions (2 Tim 2:22-26)

v6 Paul was been judged by many in this fellowship, led into the error by the false teachers and false apostles
He is ready to revenge/retaliate against/punish all disobedience against God...
when their obedience is perfect!

Paul is not judging this Church as it is judging him,
he is exhorting them to look to God and not to men;
he is pointing them to Jesus the Good Shepherd

v7 Spiritual birth, being made a child of God, is an inward reality...a matter of the heart

1 Sam 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Ps 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Prov 20:27 The spirit of man *is* the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

False teachers attack on the outward appearance
False teachers are accepted on the outward appearance

So the Apostle Paul exhorts the church at Corinth to examine themselves and him in a deeper and more truthful way than that which meets the eye...

1 Cor 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Rom 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

v8-10 The Apostle (there are only 12 given to the Church, Eph 4:11a) Paul is not ashamed of the office...and its authority...that the Lord has given to him
The office and the authority was given for the Body's good/edification,
not for its harm/destruction

2 Cor 1:24

However, the authority TAKEN by the false teachers and false apostles is for the “good” of the teachers and apostles, at the expense/harm of the people

Rom 16:17-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

The false teachers and false apostles, looking on things after the outward appearance, say Paul’s letters, like the first one to them, are

- weighty...heavy, burdensome, grievous
- powerful...forceful, packing quite a punch

Paul personally is

- physically weak...feeble, short little fella
- vocally (in a society that valued booming orators) contemptible... squeaky irritating voice

v11-12 But Paul warns them: Don’t be fooled by the outward because I’m coming with the inward – faithfulness, weighty and powerful boldness!

Because he would not dare count himself with or compare himself to the false teachers and false apostles that commend themselves

He is commended of the Lord, the false are not

He and they are two radically different “classes” of apostles –

- he true and they false
- he wise and they foolish

They measure themselves against each other...using worldly metrics of numbers

Paul measures himself against Jesus...using God’s metric of faithfulness

They compare themselves against each other...sinner vs sinner

Paul compares himself to Jesus...sinner vs Holy God the Redeemer

They operate on the “horizontal” plane of man...men-pleasers

Paul operates on the “vertical” plane of the Living God...God pleaser

Gal 1:10b if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Here we see the sin of comparing and competing amongst ourselves

What is the root?

Pride, to be better than another...the root of sin

Is 14:12-14, Ezk 28:12-19

What does God say about pride?

Prov 8:13, Prov 16:18

Who is afflicted with pride?

Every descendent of Adam and Eve, believer and unbeliever

In the little boy's game I play with a bunch of old men, we compare and compete amongst ourselves – team win/loss records and individual batting averages, a source of both boasting and discouragement

Is the sin of competing and comparing in the Church?

A. For “titles”/positions

B. People compare their church to other churches.

Like parts of the Body comparing themselves to other parts.
All parts are different in function and purpose

C. Years ago I was “courted” by another pastor in Ahwatukee, who was more of a business manager and an enterprise/brand builder than a pastor/shepherd
He tried very hard to sell me on merging the two churches...in order to have a bigger church

D. Every Pastor's Conference I ever attended

When meeting another pastor, 90%+ of the time they would ask,
How many people in your church?
How many services are you doing?
The pastors sharing were always from mega-churches

E. Ten years ago at a Pastor's Conference...

The leadership of the “non-denominational denomination”

- the 2nd generation of the Movement
- all pastors of mega-churches

held to the “Bigger is Better” philosophy of the world

In the Pastor's Conference they shared with all the pastors that

- pastors of Big Churches are gifted of God
implying pastors of Little Churches were not gifted of God
- pastors of Little Churches should step aside and let the pastors of the Big Churches install big screen TVs in the Little Churches to receive the sermons/teachings of the gifted Big Churches pastors...in order to win more souls for Christ

Because successful and meaningful ministry is determined by numbers, right?

I was absolutely shell-shocked by the brazen self-serving, self-centered, self-commending self-deception by these men I had looked up to
They actually did what had been warned against for many years prior:

Gal 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

I thought, “Wow, they fumbled the hand-off!”

That was the last Pastor's Conference I attended

While not judging another man's servant (Rom 14:4)
and while knowing I have a 1:1 appointment at the judgment seat of
Christ (2 Cor 5:10),
and wanting only to hear, "**Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant:
thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler
over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.**" (Matt 25:21)

I am resolved to 2 Tim 4:7

- fight a good fight
- finish my course
- keep the faith

My accountability before the Lord is not numbers, it is my faithfulness
I have opted to Stay the Course...on the old path as spoken to and thru a
faithful servant of God ministering in a dying nation

Jer 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and
see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good
way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for
your souls.

I am staying the course in my walk with the Lord, following the
philosophy of ministry given to me and the example of being a
genuine servant of God modelled to me by a humble man the Lord
used mightily

v13-14 Paul is declaring that he will not boast in himself but will in the authority God gave to
him

He will be faithful to his calling, which included reaching out to the Corinthians with the
Gospel in a city rife with carnal pleasures and spiritual wickedness

After all...

1 Cor 1:27-29 God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the
wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to
confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the
world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and
things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no
flesh should glory in his presence.

v15-16 And in being faithful to his calling and led by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul will not
build on another man's foundation

Rom 15:15-20

And his hope/confidence is that when the faith of the saints in Corinth grows...
faith grows by hearing and obeying the Word of God, not by ear-tickling...
“his” ministry will be even more fruitful and well-pleasing to the Father
as “their” ministry reaches out to preach the Gospel in regions around them

v17-18 Rom 3:10
Rom 3:23
Rom 3:27...where is boasting then?

ONLY in the Lord

1 Cor 1:30-31 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us
wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in
the Lord.

He who exalts himself and pats himself on the back is

- false
- foolish
- self-serving
- self-centered
- not commended/approved

But he who humbles himself is exalted by the Lord and is commended/approved

Value and worth in the world is measured in numbers

Value and worth in the eyes of God is measured in faithfulness and Christ-likeness

Ps 75:6-7 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from
the south. But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up
another.

Prov 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

We live in perilous (spiritually fierce) times

We are behind enemy lines fighting spiritual warfare

Jesus, the Light of the World, came into darkness, to seek and save the lost

He sent us, the light of the world, into darkness to seek and save the lost, letting our light
shine that those in darkness would see our good works (Christ-likeness) and
glorify our Father in heaven

Matt 16:18 **upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not
prevail against it.**

Shining the light and sharing the Gospel must be done inside and outside the Church
Know how to use the weapons of our warfare and boldly use them with the meekness and
gentleness of Christ