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2 CORINTHIANS

Chapter 10 WEAPONS OF WAR

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Last week we talked about "GIVING".

1. Paul was exhorting the church in Corinth to give to the poor in Jerusalem.
2. And the key verse of the whole teaching was in Chapter 8 verse 9.
 - a) **2Co 8:9 NKJV For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.**
 - b) This verse is the correct "motivation" for all giving.

B. This morning, we will study **Chapter 10** and what "REAL DISCIPLESHIP" means.

1. Paul had been accused of not really being a true Apostle!
2. Because of Paul's small build and not so handsome face, he was accused of writing "powerful" letters when he was away but being "wimpy" in presence.
 - a) You know, a true man or woman of God will often be unjustly accused.
 - (1) But we must be very careful not to use worldly methods in our response.
3. An O.T. verse that would apply to this situation is in **1Sa 16:7 NKJV But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the* LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**
 - a) Paul is about to tell them that they are using worldly methods to judge his office, and his authority.
 - b) He tells them that he will not fight on that level because he has "weapons" they know little or nothing about.
 - (1) In this Chapter we learn how to use 3 very important spiritual "weapons".
 - (a) "Weapons" every disciple must learn to use well.

II. **HOW TO FIGHT IN THE SPIRIT: 2CO 10:1-2 NKJV 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. (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.**

- A. As we said earlier, some in Corinth had accused Paul of being "a tough guy" in the letters and "wimpy" in person, but notice Paul's response!
1. He made sure that he used his proper name "PAUL" which means "little".

- a) One sure way to end up in the flesh is to think too highly of ourselves.
 - (1) There will always be someone there to kick you off the ladder because God will allow it, and satan loves it: **Mat 23:12 NKJV And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**
- 2. Paul had never tried to build a name for himself. He wanted people to trust in the Lord, not in Paul.
 - a) This absence of "self-promotion" is unlike the world's system, so it was mistaken as "weakness".
 - (1) The world made the same mistake with Jesus.
 - (a) **Mat 11:29 NKJV Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**
 - (b) And yet He was strong enough to tell Pilot, (the man who thought he held Jesus' life in his hands), **Joh 19:11 NKJV Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above;....."**
 - (c) He also said in **Mat 16:18 NKJV "...I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**
 - (2) Paul had realized a very important point for fighting in the Spirit!
 - (a) The Lord had told him, . . . **2Co 12:9 NKJV ..."My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."** Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
 - (i) He had learned that spiritual power is often manifested in human weakness.

III. HERE IS PAUL'S ANSWER TO THEIR ACCUSATIONS: 2CO 10:3-6 NKJV 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. "We cannot fight Spiritual battles with carnal weapons."
 - a) The word "warfare" in verse 4 means CAMPAIGN.
 - (1) In other words, the battles at Corinth were only a small part of a much larger evil "campaign"!
 - (2) That whole campaign now encompasses the world we live in.
 - (a) The Lord gives us a little better picture in **Eph 6:12 NKJV For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.**
 - (i) satan is still trying to destroy the Christian and the work of the Lord!
 - b) And one of his greatest "strongholds" is pride!
 - (1) It is pride that argues against the Gospel.

- (2) It is pride that exalts itself against the Lord and the knowledge of the Lord.
- (3) And it is that pride that must be humbled before every thought can be brought into captivity and we can be obedient to the Lord and His Truth.
- (4) It was the pride of lucifer that caused the first rebellion!
- 2. If Jesus had reacted with pride, he would have been playing right into satans hand.
 - a) Instead, He fought the battle with humility, and lowliness.
 - (1) When offers were made by satan to satisfy His flesh, He simply turned them all down!
 - b) If Paul had reacted to their accusation in the flesh, he would have misrepresented the Lord.
 - (1) Christians may have to live with this flesh, but we don't have to let it be our master!
 - (a) We must fight our battle in the Spirit!
 - (b) If we fight in the flesh - - we will lose!

IV. HOW TO USE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY: 2CO 10:7-11 NKJV 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. (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— (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.

- A. Gayle Erwin in his book "The Jesus Style" says the Lord has an "upside down kingdom".
 - 1. You see, in the world - power and position represent authority.
 - 2. But in the Lord's system, servants have the greatest value.
 - a) **Mar 10:41-43 NKJV** And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. (42) But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "**You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. (43) Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.**"
- B. Paul's opposition in Corinth was mistaking his meekness and servants heart for "WEAKNESS".
 - 1. Paul never denied that he had authority - he only refused to use it in and unspiritual manner.
 - a) The Judaisers were using the church to "build up their authority".
 - b) Paul was using his authority to "build up the church".
 - 2. Many Christians have evidenced their immaturity and true character when given authority.

- a) A mature Christian uses authority to "grow", both himself and those he serves.
- b) The immature Christian just "swells" in the use of authority.
 - (1) Paul warned Timothy about selecting Elders in **1Ti 3:6 NASB** and **not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.**
- c) A mature Christian uses authority in such a way that it "earns" respect.
- d) Immaturity just "demands" respect and obedience.
- e) A mature Christian may suffer himself while he makes sure he has all the facts.
- f) Immaturity will act quickly to relieve its own pain at the risk of hurting others.
- g) Jesus didn't say "Wash my feet!" - He put on his work clothes and washed all the disciples'.
 - (1) The use of Spiritual authority must follow the example of Christ!

V. HOW IS SPIRITUAL MINISTRY EVALUATED? 2CO 10:12 NKJV 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.

A. First of all, it's very hard to measure a miracle!

- 1. If it is the Lord doing the work through us then it is His work.
- 2. If it is His work then it is a miracle. How can we measure that?

B. The Lord's "measuring stick" is different than ours:

- 1. The 7 churches in the book of Revelation perceived themselves to be one way but the Lord saw them to be another.
 - a) He told the poor church that they were really rich, and the church that boasted of riches, he proclaimed to be poor!
- 2. Christians often measure their walks by how some other Christian is doing.
- 3. Often we measure our walks by our amount of activity for the Lord.
- 4. And churches still determine success by the numbers and popularity.
 - a) In reality it may be - that when you are going through your greatest trial that you are growing the most - and yet unable to serve temporarily due to the pain.
 - b) And regardless of a churches size it could just be a "social club for the spiritually lame".
 - (1) Not all Christians go to a church for Spiritual reasons.
 - (2) Many choose a church for size, color, convenience, and messages that won't convict nor change them!
 - c) Paul suggests 3 questions that can be helpful in "evaluating" our ministries.

VI. 2CO 10:13-18 NKJV 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. (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.

A. **AM I WHERE THE LORD WANTS ME TO BE?**

1. I believe the Lord assigns us all a "field" of servanthood just as He did Paul.
 - a) He wants us at a particular church serving a particular group of people with a specific ministry in mind.
 - (1) (That may be just growing and healing)
 - b) The Lord will evaluate or measure our work by that calling: by what he has assigned to us not someone else.
 - c) Many Christians have such a "universal" approach to the church and serving that they are never anywhere long enough to serve anyone!

B. **IS THE LORD HONORED AND GLORIFIED IN MY SERVICE?**

1. Paul made it clear that he would not boast in another's work nor invade another man's territory to build on a foundation that the other man had established.
 - a) Wives and husbands often depend on their spouse's walk and "authority" instead of building their own relationship with the Lord.
 - b) We all need to spend more time looking at the "fruit" of our lives instead of the "results" of our ministries.

C. **CAN THE LORD COMMEND THE WORK I AM DOING?**

1. The word "**commends**" in verse 18 means = "to approve by testing."
 - a) Will what my life represents - stand the test!
2. We can praise ourselves easily. Others may think we are wonderful! But does the Lord praise the work that our life represents?

VII. CONCLUSION

A. **Verses 23-28** in **Chapter 11** (Which we will cover in more detail next week), give us the marks a true disciple.

1. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal!
 - a) We **MUST** learn to fight in the Spirit, not with fleshly pride.
2. Every Christian has some Spiritual authority: we need to use it to build not destroy!
 - a) We need to be a servant not a commander.
3. If we must evaluate our ministry let it be by the scars, not the stars!