

Lesson Two

Outline

Title: Beware of worldly substitutes – be strong in the Lord

Text: Ephesians 6:10-12

Introduction: Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Doctrine, talents, skills, and good conduct cannot replace the power of God. Our warfare is not carnal.

Illustration: The Enigma Code Machine.

1. The armour of God means to love Christ first. Doctrine must lead us into a closer relationship with Christ.
2. The armour of God means to be totally dependent upon Christ. Our talents and skills must be subjected to the Lordship of Christ.
3. The armour of God means to be holy through the life of Christ dwelling in us. Self righteousness can never produce holiness.
4. The armour of God means to let love be our motivation and not success. Carnal methods have no power in spiritual warfare.

Introduction: Our own abilities are not enough to overcome the enemy. Spiritual strength and power is through a close personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

The scripture says 'be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might' (Ephesians 6:10).

in the Lord (relationship with Jesus Christ) and

in the power of His might (The Holy Spirit empowered life)

There is a danger that we can neglect our relationship with the Lord and allow other things to fill our lives.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 'For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;'

Illustration:

The Enigma Code Machine

Was essential to the Allies in World War 2

The machine was brilliant but it produced a false confidence in the enigma code.

The ability of the Allies to decipher the enigma code provided invaluable information throughout the entire war.

Reliance upon carnal weapons in a spiritual warfare will give advantage to the enemy.

2 Corinthians 10:4



Substitutes for the power of God

We must beware that we do not allow substitutes to replace the power of God in our lives.

Even things that are good can rob us of our spiritual power if we trust in them instead of Christ.

The false armour of morality, legalism, and religion is no good in spiritual warfare.

The armour is for close combat - personal fight.

But we fight with an army and we must watch for one another.

If we put our trust in our own abilities and talents it will make us vulnerable and easily defeated.

We must never allow the enemy to trick us into using the gospel to exalt our abilities and talents.

1. The armour of God means to love Christ first.

We can be more concerned over defending the faith than keeping a close relationship with Christ.

Doctrine must lead us into a closer relationship with Christ.

Church at Ephesus (c. 90 AD)

Revelation 2:1-7.

Leaders were fervent defenders of doctrine.
(2:2-3)

But left their first love. (2:4)

Commanded to do the first works (2:5)

What are the first works? (Ephesians 1:15)

1. Faith in the Lord Jesus
2. Love unto all the saints



The theatre at Ephesus

Ephesus was a great city with a population over 400,000.

We must recognise that our enemy is not flesh and blood but all the spiritual powers of darkness.

People are not the enemy. Our warfare is not against people.

We must love the people - we fight against the spiritual powers that control the people.

- Love fulfils the law:

Galatians 5:14 'For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as yourself.'

- We are to love our enemies because they are not the real enemy...

Matthew 5:44 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you...'

- If we fight one another we will help the devil do his work by destroying one another:

Galatians 5:15 'But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.'

2. The armour of God means to be totally dependant upon Christ.

There is a danger that professionalism can replace the need for the power of the Holy Spirit. 'For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power', 1 Corinthians 4:20.

Our talents and skills must be subjected to the Lordship of Christ.

Question: Why does Paul say the kingdom of God is not in word when our faith is built upon the Word of God? Paul uses the Greek word 'logos' which is used for the Word of God.

The devil is not afraid of words. If we wrestle against the devil merely by quoting scripture it will not work. The Word of God must be living in us.

Methods, abilities and organisational skills are not able to make us victorious over the enemy.

Good singing can move the emotions;

Good speaking can win decisions; and clever words can raise large offerings; but God's work can only be achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit. The world trusts in riches (Proverbs 10:15), but riches have no power in spiritual warfare.

'God's work done God's way will never lack God's supply' - Hudson Taylor



CIM Missionaries with Hudson Taylor in 1891.

Picture from Wheaton College Archive.

Trusting the Lord to supply also requires letting the Lord lead us.

There will always be a trial and this is when we are tempted to take off the armour of God and trust in our own methods.

Philippians 4:19.

We need the power of God.

Paul's preaching was in 'demonstration of the Spirit and of power', 1 Corinthians 2:4.

Illustration: An electrician must know how to wire a house. He must have knowledge. But all his work is useless if there is no power supply to connect with.

In the Christian life there is the temptation to take an easier route.

Alternatives to the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Psychology without the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
2. Entertaining music without the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
3. Philosophy without truth.
4. Counselling without the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Note: Don't throw the baby out with the dirty bath water but be aware that education, music and personal counselling alone cannot bring spiritual change. Only the Holy Spirit can do this. We must learn to move in the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. The armour of God means to be holy through the life of Christ dwelling in us. There is a danger that good moral living can replace the need for holiness, Matthew 5:20.

Self righteousness can never produce holiness.

The tragedy of the Exclusive Brethren

When Jim Taylor led the Exclusive Brethren he enforced strict rules.

The movement was devastated when Jim Taylor was accused of having an adulterous affair with a 32 year old mother of 4 from Aberdeen.



London Methodist Central Hall (1959)

G R Cowell (standing) publicly opposes Jim Taylor Jr. (seated behind him with hands in lap).

Strict rules do not produce holiness

The Strict rules of the Taylorites

They must not:

- visit other churches
- join any other religious organisation
- join a trade union
- join a professional organisation (this excludes members from professions such as medicine and pharmacy)
- join any group that includes people outside the Exclusive Brethren
- live in the same building, including apartments and semi-detached houses, as outsiders (this means that members can't share a house with a spouse or with children if the spouse or child has been expelled from the Exclusive Brethren)
- share a driveway with an outsider
- share private drainage facilities
- marry outside the Exclusive Brethren



Holiness is Christ living in us.

The epistle of Galatians is written to show that holiness does not come by keeping the law.

The gospel brings new life which we must walk in.

Galatians 5:16 'This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'

We are to put on Christ

Ro 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us **put on the armour of light**.

Ga 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have **put on Christ**.

Eph 4:24 And that you **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Eph 6:11 **Put on the whole armour of God**, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Television is a means of teaching and evangelism.

Although television can be so effective, it can also destroy the spiritual life of the people involved in it.

Instead of sacrificial love:

1. Pride – big name ministries
2. The love of money - obsession with raising funds
3. Lust of the flesh – wrong desires

Many big name ministries have been built upon fleshly methods.

The outward appearance of a ministry can be very different from the real motives driving the ministry. Matthew 7:22-23.

For instance:

The PTL Club (Heritage USA)



Summary:

1. We must love Christ first. Making our stand for truth must not replace our relationship with Christ.
2. We must be totally dependant on Christ . Our methods, talents and abilities must not replace our dependence upon the power of God.
3. The life of Christ in us is our righteousness alone. Self righteousness must never replace the righteousness of Christ in us.
4. Love must motivate us at all times. Carnal methods will not help in spiritual warfare.