

## Christians in Spiritual Warfare

### Course: The Armour of God

#### Lesson 4

**Lesson Title:** Stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

**Text:** ‘Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.’ Galatians 5:1

**Theme:** Stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

**Introduction:** The devil seeks to bring people into bondage.

It is often the things that are good that the devil uses to bind us. See Luke 17:26-30.

For instance:

- the desire to keep the law,
- the desire for friendship and acceptance,
- marriage, and
- the concern for everyday needs.

All these things are good but if we live for these things we will lose the liberty that is in Christ.

**Introductory Story:** Personal Testimony - boys on the London Underground.

Just before Christmas 2002 I went by ship from London to my home in Denmark. I was able to take as much luggage as I could carry so I used my son's rucksack, but I was not used to wearing it on my back. I had to go to the harbour by train, but first I had to travel on the London Underground. When I walked down the platform at the underground train station I passed three young boys about 13 years old who were standing on the platform. They obviously saw that there were loose tassels on the bag on my back and saw an opportunity to have some fun.

I didn't take the rucksack off my back, as it was heavy and very hard to put back on when I needed to get off the train. I stood by the door of the train then the three boys came through the train to the carriage where I was standing and sat on seats nearby staring at me. I knew they were wanting to do something but I wasn't sure what. I was afraid they would try to steal my bag. I moved away from them and stood with my back to them.

I was unaware that one of the boys went silently behind me and tied one of the loose tassels to a bar on the train. A little while later I went to move and found I was stuck. I tried to reach round to loose the tassel but my arm could not reach. The only thing I could do was to take the rucksack off and untie myself. The boys had great amusement mimicking my actions while I was tied to the bar.

- The devil works in the same way. He may not be able to stop the Christian from receiving eternal life but he looks for opportunities to stop us from being able to move in our spiritual life. He seeks for ways to bind us so that our walk with the Lord is hindered. The snares can be

worldly amusements, bad company, being in the wrong place etc. But we can also become bound in our zeal for 'purity of faith'. If we put this above our relationship with Christ we can become bound by legalism, self righteousness, and become critical instead of covering sins by love.

- If a friend had been with me the boys would not have been able to tie me to the bar, and even if they had the friend could have quickly released me. In the same way we need to watch out for one another. The armour of God is given for the protection of the whole body of Christ.

### **Main Points:**

#### 1. Stand fast in the new creation,

- The Christian life is a new creation. 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away behold, all things are become new.' (2 Corinthians 5:17). New Testament Christianity is a new life. It is the life of Christ in the believer, crucified with Christ; buried with Christ; risen with Christ; seated in heavenly places with Christ). 'If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.' (Colossians 3:1-4)
- Carnality will always gravitate to the Old Testament. Legalism and morality will leave us bound to keeping the law. Holiness is the life of the Spirit. If we seek to produce holiness through our own endeavours then we will become bound by self righteousness and legalism. If we seek to live the Christian life in our own strength we will be bound by discouragement and condemnation.

**Illustration:** When a plane flies to another continent it is bound by laws. It must fly at a certain height within a particular lane. A bird flies without a control centre directing its path yet the bird has perfect navigation. A plane needs to be given diesel or it will have no power to fly. A bird is born with the strength and ability to fly but a Boeing 747 (Jumbo Jet) takes 174 tons of fuel and costs a lot of money to fill. The Old Testament law is like a control centre. The New Testament Christian is like the bird that does not need a control centre.

#### 2. Stand fast by walking in the Spirit.

- Our lives must produce the fruit of the Spirit through our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ otherwise we will be in bondage to the works of the flesh, Galatians 5:19-24.
- Walking in the Spirit means walking in love and not giving place to the works of the flesh. Galatians 5:25, 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.' Walking in the flesh means being led by wrong thoughts and wrong desires, resulting in wrong actions. The works of the flesh bring bondage; the fruit of the Spirit brings freedom.
- Walking in the Spirit means serving one another in love. Galatians 5:13 'by love serve one another'. The liberty of Christ is the liberty to serve. Idolatry is the love of the world and this will stop us serving one another in love, 1 John 5:21. The love of the world is in opposition to the love of Christ. Idolatry produces bondage. The idolater becomes a slave of the idol worship.

#### 3. Stand fast by avoiding wrong relationships, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

- Wrong relationships will prevent us from using our lives for God. 'Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.' 1 Corinthians 15:33. Wrong company will lead to wrong behaviour, Psalm 1. When I was at Bible school we were taught that the path of wrong behaviour can begin with shock at seeing the bad behaviour, but then this can lead to acceptance as we become more acquainted with the bad behaviour and finally we can end up participating in the bad behaviour.

Disgusted and shocked – accustomed and accepting – active and participating.

The armour of God must be worn at all times otherwise we can come to accept the world's standards and participate in lustful actions that will destroy our testimony.

Love not the world. 'Keep your heart with all diligence', Proverbs 4:23.

- Unequally yoked together, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' 2 Corinthians 6:14. A yoke is a wooden crosspiece that is fastened over the necks of two oxen and used for ploughing. The oxen are yoked to be one. When unbelievers are yoked with believers there is a conflict of interests. The believer is bound by the unbeliever. Being unequally yoked in marriage will leave us unable to fulfil our ministries. There is liberty when two are yoked having one mind; to serve Christ.

4. Stand fast in the joy of the Lord, Philippians 4:4. Christians become bound when they are 'full of care'. The evidence of being free is a joyful relationship with Christ every moment of the day.

- Ministry must be out of joyful hearts. People who minister joy from a platform must minister joy in their homes otherwise it is 'a performance of joy' and not 'a life of joy'. They are bound but pretend to be free. Joy has nothing to do with circumstances. Happiness is dependant upon favourable happenings. Joy rejoices in the Lord. We should examine ourselves to see if we are 'full of joy' or 'full of care'.
- Rejoicing in the promises of God. 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' 2 Peter 1:4. Our joy is in what God has promised. Whatever may happen 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' Romans 8:28

### **Summary:**

1. Stand in the liberty of the new creation. It is the life of Christ dwelling in the believer.
2. Stand in the liberty of Christ by walking in the Spirit. Glorify the Lord with our lives and do not love the world. The love of the world is opposed to the love of Christ.
3. Stand in the liberty of Christ by keeping in right relationships and not become bound through friendship with the world.
4. Stand in the joy of the Lord. Free from the bondage of the cares of the world by trusting in the promises of God.