

Sermon #86 — Ephesians Sermons

Title: **“TAKE THE SWORD!”**

Text: Ephesians 6:17

Subject: *The Word of God—The Sword of the Spirit*

Date: Tuesday Evening — November 28, 2017

Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and David Burge*

Introduction:

“Take the Sword!” – **“Take the Sword!”** That is the command of God to all who are his in Ephesians 6:17. And that is the title of my message. - **“TAKE THE SWORD!”**

It is not enough not to be conquered, we must conquer. We are not merely to defend our ground, we are to assail the enemy. We not only take the helmet to protect our head, we must also take the sword to assault the enemy. Ours is a stern conflict. We must stand and withstand, assail and conquer. Therefore, we must take unto ourselves the whole armor of God.

NO COMPROMISE

The defense of Zion’s walls and the defense of our souls, and our assault of the gates of hell and our

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conquest over the world the flesh, and the devil must be obtained by fighting, stern, relentless, determined war.

Many try compromise. But, for faithful souls, compromise is out of question. With regard to spiritual matters (The Truth of God, The Glory of God, The Word of God), we must be like **Moses in Pharaoh’s court**, stand our ground, feet firmly planted, and refuse the slightest compromise at any point.

The language of deceit is not suitable for a blood-bought tongue.

Our adversary, the Devil, is the father of lies. Those who are with him understand the craftiness of deception. But God’s saints abhor it. If we discuss terms of peace, and attempt to gain something by compliance, we have entered a course of shame and disgrace. Our Savior, our Captain has sent us out to offer concessions to the enemy.

Men tell us, our flesh tells us, “Yield a little and the world will accept you. If your doctrine were a little more lax, not quite so sharp, if you just weren’t so

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dogmatic, you would not meet with so much opposition.”

But we have no such command from our Commander, Christ the Lord. When peace is made, he will make it. And there can be no peace for the ungodly until they surrender to our mighty Commander, whose name is the Prince of Peace, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords – The Mighty God! **He says, “Take the Sword!”**

We can never hope to gain anything in this warfare by being neutral, or granting an occasional truce. We are not to cease from our conflict and try to be appease, or even make ourselves more appealing to our Lord’s enemies. **In the Kingdom of God, compromise is treason!** “Take the sword!” “Take the sword!” There is no time for philosophical talk and intellectual debate. The word thunders out, “Take the sword!” Our Captain’s voice is a clarion trumpet sound, “Take the sword!”

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Let’s read Ephesians 6:10-17 together.

(Ephesians 6:1-17) “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

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We are not obedient to our text unless with clear, sharp, and decisive firmness, courage, and resolve, we “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*” We must march over the gates of hell and up to the gates of the city Beautiful with our sword in hand.

Proposition: God the Holy Spirit here teaches us that the inspired Word of God is a sword, mighty through the power of God, by which the enemies of Christ are slain.

This is the last piece of armor named by the Apostle Paul in this chapter. It should be noted that **this is the only offensive weapon named.** We are to use the sword of the Spirit, and that only as our weapon of offense. So, very much need to know how to handle this mighty two-edged sword, and determined to substitute nothing in its place. Let our Commander’s voice ring in our ears this hour and inspire our souls for the conflict. - “Take the sword, take the sword, and go forth to battle.”

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Divisions: Let me show you four things in this message.

1. What is the sword of the Spirit?
2. Why is the Word of God called a sword?
3. Who must take the sword of the Spirit?
4. How are we to use this mighty weapon?

WHAT?

1st — **What is the Sword of the Spirit?** The answer is plainly given in our text: — *“The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”* The Holy Spirit has a Sword. The Spirit of God is as quiet as the dew, as tender as the anointing oil, as soft as the evening breeze, and as peaceful as the dove. But he has a sword. But this Sword is unlike all others. With this Sword he both kills and makes alive. He bears not the sword in vain. Of him it may be said, *“The LORD is a man of war, Jehovah is his name.”*

CHRIST

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THE LIVING WORD

The essential, living Word of God is our Lord Jesus Christ, his eternal Son. Christ is the full, complete revelation of God to men. He is the embodiment of the Divine Revelation. We have this plainly stated in several passages of Scripture.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

“The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12-13).

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“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God” (Revelation 19:13).

THE WRITTEN WORD

These passages all speak of our great Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But he is not the Word of God spoken of in our text. **Here Paul is talking about written, or declared Word, that goes forth out of the Savior’s mouth.** *“And out of his mouth went a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations.”* I want you to note several things about this *“Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”*

The Holy Scriptures are undoubtedly the Word of God. By the Scriptures, I mean the Old and the New Testaments in their entirety. **The Scriptures are called the Sword of the Spirit, because he is the author of Book.** The Holy Spirit revealed the mind of God to holy men whom he chose. He spoke the

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word to their hearts and made them think as he thinks and write what he would have them to write. So that, all that they spoke and wrote, under his influence, was spoken and written as the very Word of God.

- God did not give his prophets and apostles a theme to write on according to their own abilities. They were secretaries who wrote infallibly what he dictated.
- This is the claim of those men who wrote the Scriptures. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God”* (2 Timothy 3:16). That is, the Word of God came as truly and immediately from the heart and mind of God, as our breath comes from our bodies. *“Holy men of God spoke as they were moved (or carried along) by the Holy Ghost”* (2 Peter 1:20).

We do not have to depend only on the testimony of those who penned the Scriptures. There is abundant evidence that this Volume is the very voice of God written out on paper. The very

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substance of the Scriptures demonstrates their Divine origin.

There are many historical statements in the Bible that could not have been known except by revelation.

- The account of the creation must have been revealed.
- The everlasting decrees of God must have been revealed.
- The covenant of eternal grace is a matter of revelation alone.

The honest integrity and simplicity of those men who recorded the Scriptures in recording the faults and failures of themselves and their dearest friends and companions shows their divine origin.

Find me a volume anywhere that is written by a man that records the faults of that man, his family, or his friends, without making excuse for them. I hold the only Book of that nature in my hand.

- Noah’s drunkenness is stated plainly.

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- Abraham’s sin is not covered.
- Moses revealed his own faults. And the idolatry of his brother, and the sin of his sister are not omitted.
- David, the man after God’s own heart, is set before us not only in his greatness, but also in his weakness.

The same spirit is demonstrated throughout the gospels, the book of Acts, and the epistles.

- Peter’s Denial
- The Disciples’ Forsaking of Christ
- Their Unbelief
- Thomas
- Peter at Antioch
- Paul’s Vow

The absolute and perfect fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament are an undeniable proof of their divine origin.

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- The intricate details of Christ’s Person, his birth, his life, and his sufferings are plainly set forth in the Old Testament.
- The many things with reference to the nation of Israel were prophesied long before they took place. — Their bondage in Egypt and the day of their deliverance. — The exact period of their Babylonian captivity. — Their rejection of the Messiah, — And their utter ruin.

The doctrinal portions of Scripture are a positive stamp of Divine inspiration.

- The nature and character of God is a matter known only by revelation.
- The Trinity of the Divine Persons could not be known, but by revelation.
- The truths of the gospel could have no source, but the mind of God.

The substance of Scripture demands a belief in their divine origin. — Their perfect unity compels us to say this is the Word of God. The books of the

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Old and New Testaments are 66 in number. They were written over a period of four thousand years, by a great variety of men. Yet, they all contain the same message, declaring unto men that the Holy and Just God is merciful to sinful men, and saves them by the substitutionary work of his own Son. In a word, the message of the Bible is this: *“In due time, Christ died for the ungodly.”*

Another demonstration of Divine inspiration is the effects of the Bible upon men. The Word of God searches the heart and pierces the conscience.

- It tells a man things about himself that no one could know but the man himself.
- It tells us things about ourselves that we do not even know.
- The Word of God powerfully convinces men of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
- And the Word of God has the power to comfort and raise the souls of men.
- The Bible is alone powerful to convert men.

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This Book is the Word of God, and this alone, is the Sword of the Spirit. As the Word of God it is absolutely complete and sufficient. — *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son”* (Hebrews 1:1-2).

- The Word of God, which was completed with the writings of the apostles of Christ himself, is God’s full revelation.
- The Bible is sufficient, in itself, for all things (2 Timothy 2:15-17).
- It makes us wise unto salvation, showing us the way of faith.
- It is our doctrinal creed.
- It is our book of discipline.
- It is our only rule of faith and practice.

The Word of God is the only sword employed by the Holy Spirit for the salvation of men and the edification of the saints.

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- Many today have stooped to cheap tricks, entertainment, and human devices to imitate the accomplishment of what they think the gospel cannot do.
- The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. It is our business only to declare to men the Word of God. We dare not assume the role of the Church of Rome, and make a new word from God.
- We need no revelation, no vision, no authority, but this: — *“Thus saith the Lord.”*

WHY?

2nd — **Why is the Word of God called the Sword of the Spirit?** The Word of God, in the hand of the Spirit, wounds terribly, and makes the heart of man to bleed. Some of you can remember how that you were gashed Sunday after Sunday, week after week, by this mighty Sword. The mighty sword pursued you everywhere, until finally your heart was dashed

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in pieces and you were slain. **But then, he that killed made you alive.** But still the Word is a sword!

- How it pierces!
- How it hacks away at the flesh!
- How it cuts our pride!
- How it demolishes our idols!

The Word of God is a sharp two-edged sword.

John Gill said, “The Word of God is compared to a sword, for its two edges: the law and the gospel. The one convicts of sin and cuts it to the heart, and the other cuts down all the goodness of man.”

With one swing of the sword, the law of God slays the sinner.

- The demands of the law are holy and perfect.
- Every man has broken the law.
- Every man is under the sentence of condemnation.
- Every man is without excuse.

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Yes, the law is to be preached. We preach it in all its fulness and utter severity. But it is not a rule of life. It is a minister of death. By the law the sinner is slain. But flesh is a creature that does not die easily. There lays the man, wounded and bleeding. But he has some silly notion of helping himself.

So we bring the sword back again, and with the edge of the gospel, we cut down all the goodness of man. The law destroys sin, and the gospel destroys self-righteousness. The law brings the sinner unto despair, and the gospel destroys all carnal hopes.

- God will accept nothing but the perfect righteousness of his Son.
- God will accept nothing but the full satisfaction of divine justice.
- God will save the sinner altogether by grace, or he will destroy the sinner according to the strictness of divine justice.

Not only is the Word of God a sword; here it is called the Sword of the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit

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alone who can instruct us in the proper use of this weapon. No one can handle the Sword of the Spirit correctly unless he is taught of God.

- The saints of God know that which is the voice of God by instinct, for the Holy Spirit dwells in them.
- The Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them to us.
- He teaches us daily those things that are written in the Book of God.

The Spirit of God alone makes this sword powerful and effectual. When the Holy Spirit makes the Word of God effectual to the hearts of men, then we can say with the Apostle Paul, *“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds”* (2 Corinthians 10:3). We have seen giants slain by this sword in the hands of the Spirit, and we yet expect to see others slain.

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As this sword is the product of the Spirit of God, it is he that preserves it. — *“The word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”* (1 Peter 1:25).

WHO?

3rd — **Who must take the sword of the Spirit?**

- **This is a charge given to every Child of God.**
— *“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”*
- **This is a charge given to every gospel church.**
— *Take the word of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”*
- **This is a charge given to every preacher of the gospel.** — *“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”*

The Lord God, who chose us and called us to the work of the gospel, has laid down the method of our

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ministry and the weapons of our warfare. All carnal weapons which we must carefully avoid.

- Human Reason
- Human Eloquence
- Human Emotion
- Deceit and Trickery

The only weapon of our warfare is the Word of God.

- Reverence it.
- Study it.
- Pray over it.
- Meditate upon it.
- Preach it tenderly, powerfully, persuasively, fully, and boldly.

In preaching the Word of God we must insist upon the foundation doctrine of the Word (The Doctrine of Christ) continually.

I wish that preachers would quit trying to be original, and brilliant. Oh, that preachers would in simplicity declare the Word of God.

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- Man’s utter ruin by the fall.
- Redemption by the blood of Christ.
- Regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
- And the absolute Lordship and sovereignty of Christ.

HOW?

4th — **How are we to use this mighty weapon?**

Here Paul tells us to take “*the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*” But what are we to do with it?

We must use it against all our enemies.

- When Satan would tempt us, we must repel him by “*thus saith the Lord.*”
- When our lusts rage within us, we must fight them off with “*it is written.*”
- When heresies are propounded, we must put them down by “*God hath spoken.*”
- When doubts arise, we must hear the Word of God.

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- When afflictions come, we must listen to the voice of God in his Word.

We must use the Sword of the Spirit to invade the kingdom of darkness.

1. This alone will convince men of sin.
2. This alone will reprove men with righteousness.
3. This alone will persuade men of justice satisfied.
4. It is by the Word of God that sinners are slain.

APPLICATION

I am done when I have made a practical application of these things for us all.

1. See that you reverence your Bibles.
2. Believe your Bible. This is the Word of God. All things must stand or fall according to that which is written in this sacred volume.
3. Obey your Bibles.
4. Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to accompany the ministry of the Word.

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5. Take unto you *“the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”* Take it now.
6. Soon we shall overcome by this mighty weapon. — *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony”* (Revelation 12:11).
7. In the great day our Lord shall judge men by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Amen.