

## Battle Stations – II Corinthians 10:1-6

Along with the plain and simple, there are some strange and interesting things in these verses. For example, Paul *“beseeches”* us – that is certainly not unusual in itself. But we have to look hard to see about what it is he is beseeching us. He doesn’t say, *“I beseech you to serve the Lord.”* We have to find it by reading between the lines. *“I beseech you that you won’t force me to be bold when I return to Corinth.”* But it is more than that. Usually, when Paul beseeches us it is about something which is important. And it is usually based upon – founded on – something authoritative and substantial. This time he bases his plea towards us upon the MEEKNESS and GENTLENESS of Christ. When had he ever done this before. This isn’t based upon the authority of Christ; the deity or Christ or the return of Christ. *“Based upon the loving and gracious character of our Saviour, I encourage you...”* And what is that Paul? What would you like us to do? *“I beseech you to fight the good fight of faith.”* *“To fight the good fight and war a good warfare for Christ.”* Based upon the non-military MEEKNESS and GENTLENESS of our Savior, he is urging us to fight. This is strange.

Bible tells us that we are in a spiritual conflict. Over and over again, military words are used to describe our daily lives. Paul says, *“I see another law in my members **WARRING** against the law of my mind, and bringing me into **CAPTIVITY** to the law of sin which is in my members.”* *“For we **WRESTLE** not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual weakness in high places.”* *“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by faith **WAR A GOOD WARFARE.**”* *“**FIGHT** the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art also called.”* *“No man that **WARRETH** tangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a **SOLDIER.**”*

We are told that our adversary, Satan, wars against the Saints – *Revelation 12:1* and *I Peter 5: 8*. You may not like the idea of taking up arms against the Lord’s enemy, but the fact is he has taken up arms against you. As I said on Wednesday, you may not have chosen to make him your enemy, but he made that choice against you. Then somewhat differently, Peter tells us to *“abstain from fleshly lusts that **WAR** against the soul.”* And John says, *“I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have **OVERCOME** the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have **OVERCOME** the wicked one.”* That Greek word *“overcome”* is also translated *“conquer.”* We have a multitude of enemies, and it is important that we strive to conquer them. Some of them are in the world, some are in our society – and some of them are within ourselves.

Of course, we serve the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Creator of the universe. He is, by right, owner, ruler and Lord of it all. All homage and tribute should be given to Him by every living creature. And someday it shall be so – *“every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.”* But that day is yet future, and in the mean time Satan has introduced anarchy, rebellion and warfare. Satan has introduced and promoted sin, rebellion and unbelief within God’s creation. Because saints are servants of Jehovah, we are automatically drafted into the war against God’s enemy.

Of course, God could destroy all his enemies by His simple will – without the use any secondary means. And yet, He almost always uses some sort of tool – some means of judgment. As we see on several occasions in the Old Testament, Jehovah can send fire out of Heaven. Fire in those cases was a means to judgement – a tool. And He used a fissure in the ground to swallow up others – a crevasse was God’s tool. He, who can say to the fig tree *“wither and die”* and it was done, could certainly put a stop to all of Satan’s foolishness in this world. But it is not God’s desire at this time to destroy His enemies with fire or the word of His mouth. When Peter drew his sword and cut off the high priest’s servant’s ear, the Lord showed to all of us that the sword is not the method of the Lord’s warfare. On two occasions the Lord Jesus himself laid siege against the glorious temple of Herod. He attacked the sin within its walls with whips, but it appears that in no time the sin had flooded back in again. It was like beating back the waves of the sea with a stick or a whip. I think that in the cleansing of the temple Jesus was giving his disciples an object lesson. *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord of Hosts” – Zachariah 4:6.*

In Grace, God has chosen to defeat Satan’s current dominion in a completely different way. God is snatching souls from Satan, not the other way around. And we have a part to play in this battle. Not only in evangelism, but in the fight against Satan’s dominion in our own hearts. Grace is the offensive weapon designed to storm the gates of hell. *“And the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

**Here we have OUR WARFARE.**

**Verse 5 –** *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”* This war is different from all other wars. Because it’s over a kingdom which is different from all other kinds of kingdoms. This is a war of the divine

against the diabolical. And we see this throughout the pages of the Word of God. **II Corinthians 10** is not referring to anything different from what we might study in the **Book of Exodus, Joshua** or **Judges**. 90%, 95%, 98% of all war is a result of hellish passion and lust. But the kingdom of Christ is in a warfare of God **AGAINST** sin. Most wars originate in the blackened hearts of sinners. This war begins above in the very holy heart of God. Most wars destroy, but this war builds. Most wars are motivated by avarice, ambition, and appetite. This war is fueled by righteousness. Its cause is truth, mercy, and salvation – the freedom of the soul. Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers fought in a conflict called *“The war to end all wars.”* It didn’t end anything. And in a matter of the couple of decades, another war of the same size and intensity began. No one was foolish enough to say that the Second World War was a war to end all wars – they had learned their lesson. But the war of which **II Corinthians** speaks is truly a part of the war to end all war.

For the last ten days the battle moved to America’s northwest. Satan has ruled the kingdom of Spokane for more than a century. But God has chosen to bring the fight into Satan’s backyard. It has had nothing to do with avarice, ambition or appetite, but rather with souls. The Lord brought an army of three dozen men, women and children. They came armed with the Sword of the Spirit, and they started swinging with a lot greater skill than Peter had with that borrowed sword at Gethsemane.

The battlefield described in our scripture can’t be found on an ordinary map – its in the spiritual realm. Physical war is a monster of terror and woe. Peace cannot coexist with that kind of war. Comfort, health, and joy cannot be found in the midst of earthly war. It is always hoped that peace and comfort, health and joy can come as a result of man’s wars. But that is by no means a guarantee. On the other hand, the spiritual war described in our Scripture is one of compassion, goodness, sweetness, and mercy. Our banner is not a lion, bear, or eagle; rather it is a Lamb.

#### **So here is our OBJECTIVE.**

Every sinner is a fort or Citadel – a part of the battle plan – both offensively and defensively. The souls make up a huge network of Satanic defenses. And Satan will do all that he can to keep every soul that he possesses. He has 10,000 wives, and he’s not afraid to use any of them.

He uses **IGNORANCE**. *“The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.”* One of the Indian preachers this week, Bro. Gary Leach, kept saying that the native religion was one of fear. He would know better than I would, but I’d like to add that from what I have seen – the traditional native religion is also one of ignorance. It is based on a spirit creator like ours, but it has been so contaminated that it can’t see the true God.

Ignorance is essential to maintain Satan’s dominion, no matter what society or ethnicity is involved. Christ taught that *“to know the truth is to be set free.”* He said, *“If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”* Satan has been busy since the days of Adam and Eve, trying to steal God’s Word away from man. And for the last 150 years he’s been busying taking the Bible out of the Bible. But he also has successfully stolen men away from God’s Word. He has built strong holds holding men from the Bible and the Bible from men.

When people are ignorant of the scripture, they fall prey to the salesman of any religion. *“Men love darkness rather than light.”* They prefer mystery and philosophy over the plain declaration of scripture. As a result they have no fear of God. And they are blind to even Satan himself. It is imperative that we find some way to reach out into the darkness. One of the brethren at last weeks’ meetings has the ambitious goal of visiting every Indian reservation in the county. I confess that I don’t know how realistic his plan really is, but it’s his burden and not mine. I met him a couple years ago, and he told me he’d like to find one dedicated Christian in each reservation, through which God might shine a bright tiny beam of the gospel.

Well, the Lord over the last two weeks, has provided a tiny door into the Spokane reservation. A woman, named Arlene, would like us to have meetings in her home, and she is planning on inviting others to join her. Another woman, named Jackie, would come to meetings on the reservation if we had them. And who knows what might develop through the children who came two or three times to the Bible classes, learning Bible verses, scriptural choruses and doctrinal truths. The people of Satan’s kingdom will not come to the temple of the Lord’s kingdom easily. But all it may take is one or two to break down Satan’s door in Wellpinit.

Another of Satan tools is **PREJUDICE**. One of the keys to last week’s success was the presence of 30 Native Americans in our group. Every evening, they sang songs in Cherokee and Choctaw, not because the Spokanes understood the words, but, frankly, because they were something other than English. Bro. Silvers, a white man with a southern accent, was the first man to go visiting on the reservation two weeks ago, but he had at his side, Bro. Bill Blair, a dark skinned, white haired Choctaw. I would guess that if Bro. Fulton and I had been visiting in Wellpinit for the last year, we might still be looking for that initial contact. Because the fact is, Satan uses prejudice to enslave his victims. He is using it to divide the United States of America even

today.

Everywhere we turn there is propaganda is against the Lord and against the Lord's people. Most of us know what Satan has to say about our faith. We hear words like, "*hypocrites,*" "*charlatans,*" "*deceivers,*" "*hate-mongers*" and "*bigots.*" On the reservation there are more derogatory terms – like "*white man's religion.*" But even in our society the media hardly ever portrays a Bible-believers in a good light. Satan wants the world to laugh at us, if he can't get them to hate us. And we aren't surprised when they do – Native Americans or native Idahoans.

Satan uses corrupted **HUMAN WISDOM**. Why aren't the Spokanes flocking to salvation through Jesus Christ? For the same reason the English Caucasian isn't coming to Christ. Most everyone knows better than to trust the Bible and that gospel preacher. Why are there many Spokanes returning to their traditional religion? Because, they think to themselves, they are smarter than you. The mother of the Spokane native princess feels it her responsibility to maintain the traditional Spokane foods and methods of cooking. It could be that with her dried "*black moss*" there isn't also dried black native religion.

In our society, we have our shamans, our medicine men, our native holy men. We have our scientists, our PhDs our educators, psychiatrists, free-thinkers and media leaders. Just about every field of knowledge has an answer to man's problems, but rarely do any of them include the revelation which the Creator has given to us. Christians are not against knowledge, education, or science. But when these are presented with ungodly bias they are as dangerous as strychnine.

Another Satan's weapons his **PRIDE**. A few years ago, Judy, my sister and I visited the tribal headquarters of my great-grandmother's people – a Salish tribe similar to the Spokanes. Despite, my heritage, I do not look like a native and neither does my sister or wife. There was a distinct cold shoulder and lack of support as we tried to learn more about our family history. And part of that stems from native pride – and I don't necessarily mean "*Native American*" pride. It is native to all mankind.

The average person doesn't want the interference of any soldier of Christ. Representatives from God's army are not welcome in the camp of Satan. So the average Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Canadian or un-native American saus. "*I'm not bad enough to need Christ or Christianity.*" The average person, through pride, refuses the humiliation involved in repentance. But Christ has no place in the heart of anyone who thinks he's good enough for God. Christ came not to call the righteous – no matter what is the color of their skin. Satan has all kinds of weapons. But the promise of God is that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the work of His churches. And that means we must attack.

### **What are the weapons of our warfare?**

They're not carnal like the armor of Saul on David. Islam spread their corrupted word through the power of the sword – and so often has Catholicism. Protestantism spread itself by legislation and human edicts. But God's kingdom is spread by the moving the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men and women. And yet, as I said earlier, God has usually employed tools – fire, earthquakes and gospel evangelists.

We have seen the battle between God and Satan this week. Was it a coincidence that someone broke into the trailer, stealing all the sound equipment, some of the bedding and clothing of the workers? God countered by providing sufficient funds to replace everything, and by providing an address to which the new equipment could be sent. Satan has been king on the Spokane Reservation for a century through traditional religion and the Roman Catholic religion. But the Lord sent a spiritual human army into that enemy territory this week. And He supplied ground transportation for that army to reach the battlefield. A famous quote is that armies move on their stomachs, and God provided a dedicated group of ladies to feed the troops – and He supplied those cooks with the tools necessary to do the job. The Lord supplied literature and advertizing, a fabulous meeting place, shelter and safety.

And there wasn't a single thought about temporal rewards for anyone. Some churches appear to seek and to succeed through earthly rewards. There was none of that this week – it was all about unselfish sacrifice. Of course, God's kingdom can include multiplying bread and fish. But in the Bible when that was all that the people wanted, the Lord turned off the tap. God doesn't work this way, and we'd better not either. There was none of that this week. Bribery is a part of Satan's kingdom not Christ's.

The weapons of our warfare are the truth of the gospel wielded by the power of God. It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save the saved. It has been God's way to plant seed which might not germinate until another season comes along. And we are praying that some of these brethren might return next year to help reap the harvest. But it is also God's way to water that seed while it sprouts and grows. When it comes to the ministry, that water is more of the same ministry. Some of that seed has been planted – now that the seed is in the heart of a few people on the reservation – but it's our job to see that it stays moist. He has decreed we continue to pray and to minister the Word as best we can. In addition to maintaining Bible

studies on the reservation, we will see to it that those preachers who come to visit in the months to come will continue to have our support.

I have heard all my Christian life *"go into all world and preach the gospel every creature."* We do this by taking a part of our income and sending it missionaries working in other continents. And we preach the word of the Lord here in Post Falls. But there are whole nations of people who are unreached and unevangelized living less that 100 miles away – in several directions by the way. They are steeped in imaginary religions and false gods, living behind social strongholds, which have kept the gospel away for decades and even centuries. But right now, for perhaps a short time, we have an opportunity to use God's word to pull downone of those strongholds. And I, for one praise God, for permitting our little church to go on the offensive for Him. Satan may have been caught just a little off-balance this week, but you can be sure that he is unhappy, and will intensify his opposition to that attack. We need to brace ourselves.