

Hebrews 3:12-13

Beware!

The writer of Hebrews has been giving caution to his readers. Telling them to take heed to themselves, to their souls and to consider the example of those who were not considerate of the condition of their souls. Today I want to pause before we go any further and lay some foundational principles. I want to think with you all about why it matters that we be on our guard, why the constant need to be thinking with clarity in this age of sound-bytes. Because the battle lines are being clearly drawn around us on all sides, but the church seems to be sleeping, seems to be playing a dangerous game with the world. We are engaged in a war, and are soldiers of the cross of Christ... these words stir up confusion in the minds of many, for they interpret them according to the religions of the world. But that is not the manner of OUR warfare. We are not called to convert people at the point of the sword, we never have been called to do that. Why would we settle for mere outward compliance when our God is able to change the very heart of a rebel into a

son? Only false religions need to wage physical war to press their beliefs... still, we are called to a war, we are called to see ourselves as soldiers. It is important that we see ourselves as such, for someone who is IN a war but who is not AT war has a name - "casualty". Hence, we need to beware, we need to be on our guard, we need to be ready.

I. SPIRITUAL BATTLE

1. We are waging a spiritual war against evil powers in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6.10-12

2. We are called to fight according to Spiritual Principles

- a. Truth VS Lies

2 Corinthians 10.3-6

- b. Conformity to Christ VS conformity to the world.

Romans 12:1-2

c. Displaying the wisdom of God VS the wisdom of the world

Ephesians 3.8-12

3. We are called not to force compliance, but to preach for conversion.

Romans 10.14-17

4. Always on your guard, alert, ready

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

II. BE PREPARED FOR BATTLE

1. You may be called to action at any time, you never know when the thief is coming...

Luke 12:39 (NKJV)

39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

2. You must prepare and wear your equipment, and wear it always

Ephesians 6.13 – 18

3. You must condition yourself for battle.

1 Corinthians 9.24-27

III. BE PREPARED FOR TRIALS

1. You will be persecuted for following Christ –

John 15.18-20

- a. God does not see persecution in the same light that we do.

Matthew 5.10-12

- b. He sees it as a tool which shapes His children, which refines His precious ones.

1 Peter 1:6-9

- c. He will never allow trials in this life to destroy that which matters.

2 Corinthians 4.7-12

- 2. You will be dragged before rulers and magistrates

Mark 13.9

- 3. You will be hated, mocked and despised

IV. BE PREPARED FOR DANGER

Consider the example of the OT saints.

Hebrews 11:32-40

- I. You may be imprisoned - Peter, John, Paul
- II. You may be flogged - Paul, Peter, John
- III. You may be stripped of your goods –
- IV. You may be killed

V. BE PREPARED FOR DECEPTION

1. The enemy plays a deep game

a. He is the father of lies

John 8.44

b. He is a twister of scripture

Matthew 4.5-7

c. He is a master manipulator

Genesis 3.1-7

2. He is NOT invincible

- a. He is NOT omniscient - But he seems to be to many Christians
- b. He is NOT omnipresent - but we seem to think he is
- c. He is NOT sovereign - only God rules, only God does everything that He wants
- d. He is NOT God!!

3. He will NOT be victorious, though he has made even the church think that the outcome is still uncertain...

- a. He is NOT challenging God - God is not challenged, He is not in danger. We need to think about things clearly. There is NO risk whatsoever that God will be overcome.
 - i. Christ has already overcome –

John 16:33 (NKJV)

33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

- ii. In fact, YOU will overcome Satan by the power of the cross. –

1John 5.4-5

- iii. Even in our persecution, pain or death, we are already MORE than conquerors...

Romans 8.31-39

- b. the outcome of the war is sure

Revelation 20.1-3

- c. the enemy's doom is certain

Revelation 20.7-10

- d. God WILL triumph, because He HAS ALREADY TRIUMPHED!!!