

## 190911-4 Doctrine Series, The Christian Warfare-CThurman

### 33. Christian Warfare\*

All believers in this present life are in a continual warfare and combat against sin, self, the world, and the devil. They are liable to all manner of afflictions, tribulations and persecutions, to which they are predestinated and appointed. Whatsoever the saints possess or enjoy of God spiritually is by faith. Outward and temporal things are lawfully enjoyed by a civil right by them who have no faith.

*Ro.7:23, 24; Eph.6:10-18; Re.2:9, 10; 2Ti.3:12; Ro.8:29; 1Th.3:3; Gal.2:19, 20; 2Co.5:7; Deu.2:5.*  
*\*Formerly Article 31 of 1644 COF*

Personal note concerning reference that apply best to the Christian warfare:

**Internal:** Ro.7:23, 24; Ep.4:24-5:4; Ro.13:7-14; Ga.5:16-26; 6:6-10;

**External:** Ep.6:10-18; Re.2:9, 10; 2Ti.3:12; 1Th.3:3

*1Pe 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from (ἀπέχουμαι, to hold from) fleshly lusts, which war against the soul ...*

This topic of the Christian warfare divides into two parts. There is an internal conflict that the Christian experiences in the mind. It is a conflict between the flesh and the spirit. There is also an external conflict that the Christian experiences in the world. The world is against him because he is not of this world. Let's consider the first division of the Christian warfare; that there is a conflict between the flesh and the spirit.

By flesh I mean to say that there is a principle by which we would be ruled in our lives if we would yield our body to follow after the base lusts of life.

*Ro 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity (weakness) of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity ...*

*Ro.7.23 But 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.*

By spirit I mean our spirit, that since our spirit has been enlivened by the Spirit of God, but yet imperfect,

*2Co 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

we receive the directives of the Holy Spirit so that we *desire* to yield our whole person, body, soul, mind, and strength, to do the will of God. Here is the problem, and why we are so inclined to sin. Paul said,

*Ro 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

This body and the principle in it, my natural senses and the lusts agree together. This is not so for the spirit. My spirit finds no senses and lusts in the body to help me do the will of God. But my spirit, being led by the Spirit of God, would have me act according to the word of God by faith.

*Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Grieve by doing what we ought not.)*

*1Th 5:19 Quench not the Spirit. (Quench by not doing what we should.)*

So, there is a disconnect between the body and the spirit of a believer. We must agree with Paul when he said that there is nothing in the flesh to help us do the will of God.

The internal conflict in the mind of the Christian is a consequence of the new birth. When we were born again we received a super-added nature, a nature that we did not receive from our natural birth. In effect we were *overlaid* with a new nature. If we consider what the Son of God did in order to be born into human flesh we might better understand our present Christian experience.

For example, in order for the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, to become *fashioned as a man* and dwelling among man He received to Himself a

human body with its uncorrupted nature. (Phl.2.8, *fashioned as a man*; Jn.1.14, *the word was made flesh and dwelt among us*; Gal.4.4, *made of a woman*; 2Co.13.4, *was crucified through weakness*; 1Jn.3.5, *in him is no sin*) So we go from a nature fallen and corrupted by sin to receiving an *incorruptible seed*. (1Pe.1.23; 1Jn.3.9)

Another example, which might help us understand the overlaying of a new nature upon us is found in the tabernacle or tent which the LORD had national Israel erect during their sojourn to the land of promise. This tabernacle or tent represents a temporary dwelling-place and should be compared to a house or building, which represents a permanent dwelling place. (cf. 2Co.5.1) If you followed along with us through the studies of the book of Exodus you know that the O.T. tabernacle/tent represents the Person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ dwelling among His chosen people. This tabernacle was covered with four different kinds of coverings: fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, all of which relates some typical aspects of His human nature. That there are four coverings, most everyone knows that in numerology the number four represents the order of creation. (cf. Col.1.16, 4 aspects to the created order; 4 powers) The tabernacle study teaches us in a type that the Son of God took on a created form when He received a human body.

Also, in the construction of the tabernacle there is the use of shittim wood to consider. This represented the incorruptible nature of Christ's humanity. This wood was overlaid with gold. Gold represents the divine nature, or Divinity. For the Son of God to come among men God added to Him a human body with its nature. In this way the blessed Son of God could truly be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (weaknesses of our flesh) and be tempted as we are (yet apart from a corrupted nature derived from the first man Adam, so that he could do no sin).

When the Son of God condescended to take to Himself our humanity he received a nature to Himself, a nature that He had not possessed to that time. He remained God and came into the form of a human. Therefore He is the God-man. He is not God and man, two persons, or just God in another man. No. He is the God-man, remaining who He is, the Person of the Son of God come into a human body. Why discuss this? As our Lord Jesus took to Himself a nature like ours, in

the new birth we receive the experience of a new nature like Him. It is a spiritual nature.

*Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

This spiritual nature grants us that we might partake of the divine nature, the nature of God. We do not become God, but we do *partake of the divine nature*. (2Pe.1.4) Our life is derived from Him and that is why it is everlasting life. The subject before us at the moment concerns the Christian warfare, and here's the point: in the receiving of a new nature there begins an internal warfare. That warfare evidences these truths:

- The old nature did not die when we were born again.
- The old nature was not changed in the least bit when we were born again. And,
- The old nature will never be improved as long as we are in this present body of flesh and blood.

Follow with me now through the word of God and notice what we read concerning an internal warfare that is in the minds of every believer.

***Gal.5.16*** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

*17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

Meaning, there is nothing in my flesh that will help me do the will of God.)

*18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

The law says, 'Do this and live.' The Spirit says, 'Do this because you are alive.'

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

walk orderly  
walk principled

let us walk, στοιχῶμεν, 1ppl. pres. subj. of στοιχέω; walk (4), **walk orderly** (1); the noun, στοιχείον, tss. elements, rudiments, principles.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

**Eph.4.17 ¶** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

κατά

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, of yourselves according to (as a matter of fact, aorist)

*put off, ἀποθέσθαι, aor. infin. mid. of ἀποτίθημι, ἀπό off + τίθημι, to appoint, purpose, set, ordain; ἀποτίθημι, to lay down, cast off, put off, put away, put off, lay aside, lay apart; v.25, putting away.*

κατά

*which is corrupt (or, defiled) according to the deceitful lusts;*

*23 And be renewed (LXX, minded (Es.3.13); restored (Job.33.24) in the spirit of your mind;*

*24 And that ye put on the new man,  
yourselves*

*that ye put on, ἐνδύσασθαι, aor. inf. mid. of ἐνδύω; tss. to put on, to clothe, clothe with, to clothe in, to be endued, arrayed.*

*which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

*25 Wherefore putting away ([from yourselves] as a matter of fact, aorist) lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

*putting away, ἀποθέμενοι, nom. pl. masc. part. aor. mid. of ἀποτίθημι, v.22, put off.*

*26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

*27 Neither give place to the devil.*

*28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

λόγος σαπρὸς

*29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,  
rotten word*

*corrupt, σαπρός, a noun, corrupt (7), bad (1); the verb σήπω, Ja.5.2, Your riches are corrupted.*

*but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

*30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

*31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:  
removed, lifted*

*be put away, ἀρθῆτω, 3ps. aor. imper. pass. of αἴρω; tss. to bear up, take up, take, remove, take away, remove, away with, carry, put away, to lift.*

**Ro.7.14** *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

If we know Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul we confess that these things of which we just read about address issues against which we all struggle against day after day after day. There will be differences of degrees between us to which we might struggle against these things, but we all have this struggle against the flesh. There is no question about that.

Now let's consider the second division of the Christian warfare. It is the external conflict that the Christian experiences in the world. This concerns the world's hatred of him because he is not of the world.

Our Lord Jesus said that He was not of the world.

*Joh 8:23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.*

The Christian used to walk according to the course of this world.

*Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience ...*

But the truth is, because he was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world he was never, in the truest sense of the word, of the world.

*Joh 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

*Joh 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

The hatred that the world has for the children of God is first evidenced when they come to faith in Christ. This hatred increases the closer the child of God draws to Christ. It was one thing for a child of God to come to faith in Christ, but when he receives Baptist baptism the world's hatred heats up. Then if they will come into one of the Lord's churches this hatred becomes even more evident, especially as he grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the external warfare that the Christian experiences. It is a warfare the world brings to the Christian. It is comparable to how wolves respond to sheep.

*Mt.10.16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

...

*21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.*

*22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

Here are some Scriptures which show the external warfare Christians must endure.

*Re.2.9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

*10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*



*2Ti.3.12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

*1Th.2.14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:*

*15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:*

*16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*

*17 ¶ But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.*

*18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.*

*19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

*20 For ye are our glory and joy.*

*1Th.3.1 ¶ Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;*

*2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:*

*3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions (tribulations): for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.*

*4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.*

*5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.*

So the conflict in the mind and in the world is great. The Christian that does not understand that his flesh and the world are opposed to him is at a disadvantage to wage a successful campaign against them. This explains the discouragement and defeat we see in some. Many Christians today simply do not know the word of God as they ought to know it. The Christian that knows and applies the truths

of God’s word is the victorious Christian. He combats the lusts of the flesh in him and withstands the oppositions that the world directs against him. Let’s turn to and read Eph.6.10-18.

*Eph.6.10 ¶ Finally, my brethren, be strong (become empowered) in the Lord, and in the power (κράτος, dominion, the realm) of his might (ἰσχύς, strength).*

*be strong, ἐδυναμοῦσθε, 2pl. pres. imper. mid. of ἐνδυναμάω; become empowered.*

*Paul in Colossians, put on the new man ..., put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering ..., put on the armor of light ... put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

11 *Put on (Clothe yourselves with) the whole armour of God,*

*put on, ἐνδύσασθε, 2pl. aor. imper. mid. of ἐνδύω; to clothe yourselves with.*

*πρός*                                  *πρός*  
*that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*  
    *to hold up (v.13, 14) to*

*to stand, στήναι, aor. infin. of ἵστημι, to be established, set, appointed, continue, to hold up, to present.*

*πρός*  
12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities (ἐξουσίας, authorities), against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world (κοσμοκράτορας, dominions of the world), against spiritual wickedness in high places (or, heavenlies).*

13 *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand (to hold up against) in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (στήναι, to hold up, v.11, 14).*

14 *Stand (Hold up) therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on (putting on yourselves) the breastplate of righteousness;*

*having on, ἐνδυσάμενοι, nom. pl. masc. part. aor. mid. of ἐνδύω.*

*15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

*16 Above (ἐπί, upon) 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:*

*18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

At all times we have need for the whole armor of God. Sometimes the fighting that goes on in the mind against the flesh and the oppositions of the darkness of this world is intense; and at other times it seems the Lord grants a slight reprieve. But it will resume!

*Lu 4:13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*

Finally, my old nature will be with me until I am clothed upon with my house from heaven. (cf. 2Co.5.1-4, house represents the eternal & glorified body) It will neither change nor improve. Until then my only recourse is to *watch and pray*.

*Mr 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.*

There is a Christian warfare.