We Are At War!

Intro: We are all concerned with the affairs of this world because we live in the world. Our living in the United States with the freedom we have give us religious freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to assemble, the right to petition our government, and even the right to bear arms, and obviously we should never take these freedoms for granted. These freedoms were obtained through wars and battles, and we appreciate those who fought and continue to fight for them. However, there is another war in which we as Christians are engaged.

I. Christians Are In A Spiritual War

A. Christ's kingdom is not an earthly, physical type kingdom.
   1. At His arrest; John 18:10-11 “Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. 11Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”
   2. Before Pilate; John 18:36 “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

B. Christ’s kingdom is a spiritual one.
   1. It has a spiritual mission—saving souls.
   2. Luke 19:10 “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
   3. Luke 17:20-21 “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

C. Christians are soldiers in the army of Christ.
   1. 2 Tim. 2:3-4 “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”
   2. Rev. 19:14-16 “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

D. As soldiers we are to fight spiritual battles.
   1. 1 Cor. 16:13 “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
   2. 1 Tim. 1:18 “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;”
   3. 1 Tim. 6:12 “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”
   4. 2 Tim. 4:7 “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:”
   5. We put on the whole armor of God so we can fight effectively; Eph. 6:10-17 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12For 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. 13Wherefore 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. 14Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;”
6. Our weapons; 2 Cor. 10:3-4 “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the 
weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

E. We cannot be neutral or passive in this warfare.
1. Mat. 6:24 “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he 
will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
2. Mat. 12:30 “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”

II. We Are At War With Satan
A. Satan is a treacherous evil spirit.
1. 1 Pet. 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking 
whom he may devour.”
   a. Adversary is an opponent in a lawsuit and as used here as one who is on the opposite 
side of our trial of life and death.
   b. Devil means accuser or a slanderer. He is an accuser against the saints and slanders 
them to God.
   c. As a roaring lion shows his fierceness with which he stalks the righteous.
2. Rev. 20:2 “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,”

B. He even attempted to entice the Son of God to sin.
1. Mat. 4:1 “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”
   a. He used the three avenues of temptation to attempt to get Jesus to commit sin.
   b. If Jesus had submitted to any of these temptations, God’s means of redeeming man 
would have been thwarted.
2. Heb. 4:15 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise 
took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, 
the devil;”

C. The cross:
1. Satan won what seemed to be a victory in putting Jesus to death.
2. However, what was a seeming victory was in reality his defeat.
   a. Gen. 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; 
it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
   b. Heb. 2:14 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise 
took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, 
the devil;”
3. Satan’s attempt to thwart God’s means of redeeming man to Himself was dealt a crushing 
blow.

D. Adam and Eve
1. Satan was successful in getting them to sin.
2. Gen. 3:6 “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, 
and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her 
husband with her; and he did eat.”
3. Physical death was brought upon humanity because of their sin.
   a. Rom. 5:12 “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death 
passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;”
   b. Man no longer had access to the tree of life; Gen. 3:22-24 “And the LORD God said, 
Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, 
and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23Therefore the LORD God sent him forth
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from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

4. Satan will attempt to get us to sin by using the same means to tempt us; 1 John 2:16 “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

E. Elders in a congregation:

1. An elder must not be a novice.
   a. 1 Tim. 3:6-7 “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”
   b. If he is not well-grounded in the faith, Satan will use it to lead the congregation away from the Truth.

2. An elder must be well-grounded.
   a. Tit. 1:9-11 “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”
   b. Acts 20:27-31 “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

3. Numerous congregations have been lost to the cause of Christ because of unqualified elders that Satan uses.

F. We must remain watchful, alert lest Satan get an advantage over us.

1. We are not ignorant of his ways;
   a. 2 Cor. 2:11 “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
   b. The only way we can know his devices is by a study of the Word of God.

2. Thus we must be vigilant, watchful:
   a. Jam. 4:7-8 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”
   b. 1 Pet. 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

3. We must then resist the devil:
   a. Eph. 4:27 “Neither give place to the devil.”
   b. Jam. 4:7-8 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”
   c. 1 Pet. 5:9 “Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”
III. WE ARE AT WAR AGAINST THE WORLDLY AND UNGODLY IN OUR NATION

A. Pro. 14:34 “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

B. The disgraceful state of our nation (while we have not reached the state of Sodom and Gomorrah, are we coming close?):
   1. The ungodly are attempting to get federal laws passed that would legalize immorality.
      a. Homosexuality:
         (1) “Gay bill of rights” (would establish mandatory quotas for homosexuals including businesses, churches, day-care centers, etc., and make it impossible to fire a homosexual employee)
         (2) Homosexual classrooms act (force every school to introduce homosexual curriculum—starting with kindergarten—to indoctrinate young minds)
         (3) Offense of marriage act (would repeal the defense of marriage laws stating that marriage is comprised of a man and a woman and make homosexual marriages legal in every state)
      b. Destruction of marriage:
         (1) Homosexual marriage (which will open the door to other perversions—pedophilia, incestuous, etc.)
         (2) There are those who have advocated for group marriages.
         (3) There are those who have advocated for “contract” marriages (the contract would be for x number of years then the marriage would end or you could enter into another contract)
         (4) Living together without the benefit of marriage.
         (5) The end might be the death of marriage itself.
      c. Abortion:
         (1) The Roe v. Wade decision by the Supreme Court in January 1973 legalized abortion on demand.
         (2) It is estimated that over 50 million unborn babies have been aborted since.
         (3) It has been extended to first partial birth abortion and in some cases to infanticide (if the abortion is not successful, then allow the child to die after birth).
   2. Immorality, fornication and adultery
   3. Immodesty
      a. Acceptance of pornography
      b. Scantily clad men and women (hemlines come up and necklines go down, skin-tight clothing, or showing off the belly, thighs, breasts, etc.)
      c. See-through clothing
   4. Profanity, crude, vulgar language
   5. Gambling

C. We must live in the world but not be of the world.
   1. Regarding the apostles (and would apply to us); John 17:15 “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”
   2. Rom. 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
D. We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world.
1. Jam. 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
2. 1 The. 5:21-22 “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.”
3. Jam. 4:4 “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
4. 1 John 2:15-17 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

IV. We Are At War Against False Teachers
A. All false doctrine and unscriptural practices are of the devil.
1. This is true whether taught by someone who is outside of Christ or someone who is a Christian.
2. We are taught to be on guard against false teachers.
   a. Mat. 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”
   b. 1 The. 5:21-22 “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.”
   c. 1 John 4:1 “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
3. 2 Cor. 11:13-15 “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

B. Only the truth saves.
1. John 8:31-32 “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
2. Jam. 1:25 “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

C. We have the obligation to contend for the Faith.
1. Jude 3 “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
2. Jesus did in the controversies recorded in Mat. 22
3. Paul did numerous times as recorded in Acts.
   a. Against the Grecians; Acts 9:29 “And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.”
   b. With Judaizing teachers; Acts 15:2 “When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.”
   c. In the synagogue with the Jews; Acts 17:17; 19:8 “Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him…. And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.”
4. We must contend with those who teach error outside the Lord’s church.
5. We must contend with those who teach error who are members of the Lord’s church.

V. WE ARE AT WAR WITH THE LUKEWARM IN THE CHURCH
A. The church, through the years, has grown apathetic and lukewarm.
   1. Laodicians; Rev. 3:15-16 “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”
   2. The church at Ephesus: Rev. 2:4-5 “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”
      a. They seemed like a model congregation; Rev. 2:2-3 “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”
      b. They needed to return to their first love.
      c. Their first love:
         (1) Mat. 22:37 “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”
         (2) Mat. 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
     d. Have we left our first love?
   B. Are we doing those things that God expects us as a congregation to do?
      1. Are we being evangelistic?
      2. Are we keeping the church pure?
        a. Do we go to a person that we see commit a sin to try and convert him, or do we ignore it?
           (1) Gal. 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
           (2) Jam. 5:19-20 “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him: Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”
        b. Are we withdrawing fellowship from those whom we should?
      3. Regarding elders:
        a. Do we take our problems (in the home, at work, etc.) to the elders?
        b. Do we take things we are knowledgeable about that the elders need to know about to them?
        c. How can they watch for our souls and tend the flock when they do not know and are not made aware of things?
      4. The congregation can only be what the individual members of the congregation are.

VI. WE ARE AT WAR WITHIN OURSELVES
A. God does not entice us to sin.
   1. We cannot blame God for our sin.
   2. Jam. 1:13 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”
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B. We cannot blame others or the environment for sin.

C. The blame for sin rests squarely on our own shoulders.
   1. Satan tempts us, but does not force us to sin.
   2. Jam. 1:14-15 “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”
   3. Jam. 4:1-3 “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts [pleasures—ASV, NKJV].”

D. Thus, we are at war with ourselves to live God’s way.
   1. 1 Cor. 9:24-27 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
   2. Gal. 5:17 “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.”
   3. 1 Pet. 2:11 “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”

E. We can be victorious in that battle:
   1. 1 Cor. 10:13 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
   2. The way to be victorious; Psa. 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
   3. The wonderful promise if we overcome; Rev. 2:7 “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

Conclusion: We are in a spiritual battle. We can be victorious and receive the reward God offers to those who have fought well. Notice what Paul said in 2 Tim. 4:7-8 “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ‘Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”