

THE GOOD FIGHT

Paul charged Timothy to, “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” (1 Tim. 6:12). To some, the idea of fighting may seem foreign or even contradictory to basic Christian principles like love and peace. However, the Bible teaches that there can be no peace where there is the presence of sin and injustice towards God’s Word. In the life of Paul, we can see an example of fighting “the good fight of the faith.”

First, Paul acknowledged that he was in a Spiritual war. Paul states that the Christian is to serve “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). If there was no war, there would be no need for soldiers. Many individuals fail to enlist in the army of Christ. Others are added to that army through obedience to the Gospel (Acts 2:47) only to tuck their tails and run at the first sight of conflict. Still others suggest that there is no war, crying, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 8:11). If an individual will not acknowledge that there is a Spiritual war being waged, he is doomed to defeat. Only when one recognizes that the Devil and his followers are seeking whom they may devour (1 Pet. 5:8), can one have hope of victory.

Second, Paul was prepared to fight. In preparation, Paul, “put on the whole armour of God,” so that he could “stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). One should never go into battle unprepared nor unprotected. Paul girded his loins and bound his armor together with the Truth (Eph. 6:14), covered himself and his vital organs with Righteousness (Eph. 6:14; cf. Rev. 19:7-8), prepared his feet to walk in the paths of the Gospel (Eph. 6:15; cf. Psa. 119:105), grounded himself in the faith in order to shield off attacks (Eph. 6:16; cf. Col. 1:23), protected his Spiritual heart, his mind, wherein dwells the knowledge of and hope of eternal salvation to those who obey (Eph. 6:17; cf. Heb. 5:8-9), the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) which is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12), and remained constant in prayer (Eph. 6:18) that he may not fall to temptation (Mat. 26:41).

Last, Paul chose his battles wisely. Paul never fought “as one that beateth the air” (1 Cor. 9:26). Paul did not waste his energies by swinging his Spiritual fists aimlessly in the air. When Paul swung, he always made contact. He fought battles that needed to be fought. He did not shy away from rebuking the Apostle Peter to his face and in the presence of others because Peter “was to be blamed” (Gal. 2:11). Paul preached boldly, but he also knew when to walk away. When the Word of God preached by Paul and Barnabas was rejected by the Jews, “they shook off the dust of their feet against them” (Acts 13:51). Jesus proclaimed, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Mat. 7:6). When the Doctrine of Christ is “rent asunder,” Christians must come to her defense (1 Pet. 3:15). When Truth is compromised, the “change agent” must be confronted and silenced (Tit. 1:10-11). When the salvation of the souls of men are at stake, Christians must accept the charge to “seek and save” (Luke 19:10). However, Christians must also acknowledge that the seed, which is the Word of God, does not always fall on good ground (Luke 8:11-15) and, sadly, there comes a time when Christians must shake the dust from off their feet.

While some refuse to acknowledge the Spiritual battle in which we are engaged, others ignore the battle while it rages all around them. “Eyes have they, but they see not” (Psa. 115:5). Let us learn how to fight the good fight of the faith using the example of Paul. Acknowledge the Spiritual war, be fully armed and prepared to engage the enemy, and be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Mat. 10:16), choosing our battles wisely as we are sent to spread the Gospel to the world “as sheep in the midst of wolves.”

- *Brad Green*