

The Great Battle for Souls

(Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Tim. 4:1-8)

Introduction:

1. Read texts:
 - a. Eph. 6:10-18 -Spiritual battle raging
 - b. 2 Tim. 4:1-8 - Older soldiers pass, battle continues (“for” in v. 6 underscores vv. 1-5).
2. From Garden of Eden until now, God vs. Satan - not for land or money but for souls - each soul a prize to be won (Col. 2:8).
3. God's people, Satan's people - each of us on one side or other, no middle ground - can know which side we are on (Matt. 12:30).
4. Battle until end of time--Judgment Day, great separation (Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46; judged by whether we stood on the Lord's side, helped his cause, vv. 40, 45).
5. God's call: take a stand for truth and right, fight to the end.
 - a. Eph. 6:13-14 - Take a stand; stand in battle; then, can stand in victory.
 - b. 1 Tim. 6:12 - Must faithfully fight to receive eternal life.
6. How take a stand and continue to stand for truth and right in this great battle?

I. Must Obey the Gospel

- A. *Leave Satan's Army, Enroll in God's Army.*
 1. John 3:16 - Recognize we are lost in sin, God sent His Son as perfect sacrifice.
 2. John 3:5 - Gospel given by the Holy Spirit - convict of sin, godly sorrow, repentance and baptism.
- B. *God is Calling Every Soul through Gospel* (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

II. Must Rise to Walk New Life

- A. *Rom. 6:3-6, 21-23 - Rise to Walk New Life, As Christ Rose from Dead.*
 1. Baptized into Christ's atoning death, reach benefits of his blood.
 2. Dead in sin - bury old man, body of sin.
 3. Free from guilt and shame of sin, alive unto God, serve God.
- B. *Denominational Baptism Not Bible Baptism*
 1. Sprinkle or pour not meet demand of burial - sprinkle or pour a little dirt on casket?
 2. If saved at point of faith before baptism, then bury live man in baptism - anyone

volunteer to be buried alive in literal grave?

- C. *Must be from the Heart, With True Understanding of Gospel, and Result in True Change of Life* - Some dunked without being born again - not obey from the heart

III. Must Draw Close to God Each Day

- A. *Each Soul in Spiritual Relationship with God or Satan, Become More Like God or Satan.*
1. Each day listen to God or Satan, what Bible or world says.
 2. Each day pay homage to God or Satan--reveal thoughts, goals, aims of life.
 - a. Prayer, reverence, worship to God.
 - b. Worldly, sinful, ungodly conduct and conversation--homage to Satan.
- B. *Two Distinct Lifestyles, Two Different Directions.*
1. Psalms 1:1-2 - Way of ungodly, sinner, scornful vs. delight in God's Word day and night.
 2. Psalms 55:10-11, 16-18 - Two distinct ways of life.
 - a. Wicked practice evil day and night - become more like their father Satan - endanger cause and people of God
 - b. God's people delivered from danger as draw closer to Him day and night.

IV. Must Take God's Word as Final Authority

- A. *Gen. 6:14-16 - God's Word Final to Noah - wood, size, window, door, stories.*
- B. *Ex. 25:8-9 - God's Word Final to Moses.*
- C. *2 Kings 5:10-14 God's Word Final to Naaman When Cleansed - Jordan River, seven dips.*
- D. *2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11; 2 Peter 1:3 - God's Word Final Today.*
1. Speak where the Bible speaks, silent where it is silent.
 2. Positive, divine authority for all we preach and practice: direct statement or command; approved, apostolic example; necessary implication of Scripture.
 3. Call Bible things by Bible names, do Bible things in Bible ways.
- E. *Preachers, Family, Friends, or Majority Not the Authority.*

V. Must Be a Member of the Church of Christ

A. *The Church We Can Read About in the Bible.*

1. Matt. 16:18-19 - Promise of Christ to establish his church, kingdom of heaven.
2. Acts 2:47; Rom. 16:16 - Established in Jerusalem, spread throughout world
3. Eph. 5:23 Christ, head and Savior - no earthly head or headquarters.

B. *New Testament Church Not a Denomination.*

1. Name, doctrine, and practice of New Testament church authorized in New Testament.
2. Distinctive features of denominations not authorized.
 - a. Names: Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, Mormon, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Baptist, etc.
 - b. Doctrines: man-made creeds, catechisms, articles of religion, manuals, disciplines, etc.
 - c. Practices: instrumental music (Eph. 5:19; sing excludes play as gopher wood excludes all other woods); women lead mixed assembly (1 Tim. 2:12).
3. *Must be Faithful, Active Christian, Not Just on "Church Roll" (Heb. 10:25).*

VI. Must Resist Every Step of Apostasy

A. *Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim. 4:1 - Many Such Warnings Given.*

B. *Many Small Steps Taken in Ancient Apostasies.*

1. Satan's great victories often won by winning many smaller battles
2. Result: Roman Catholicism and denominations unknown to New Testament.

C. *Many Steps Taken in Modern Apostasies Among Brethren.*

1. Missionary society (1849), instrumental music (1851).
2. Premillennialism (1915-1940's).
3. Churches sponsor social meals, build kitchens, organize ball teams and bowling leagues, build gyms, etc. (1950's-1990's) (1 Cor. 11:34).
4. Churches donate money to human institutions (colleges, child-care agencies, summer camps, retirement centers, etc.).
5. Solos, quartets, choirs performing in worship services.

6. Trends developing: divorce-remarriage error, influence of sectarian and liberal concepts, loose ideas on grace and unity, positive-mental-attitude philosophy (avoid controversy, debate, calling names), demand for softer preaching.

VII. Must Keep Unspotted from World

- A. *James 1:27; 4:4 -Worldliness, Enemy of God and of God's People.*
- B. *Many Forms of Worldliness, Invades the Church in Many Ways.*
 1. Materialism: love of material things, life of ease, put God's kingdom second, indifference and neglect toward spiritual things, no prayer or Bible study in home; carnal mind, worldly attitude the root problem.
 2. Sexual immorality: fornication, adultery, including unscriptural divorce and remarriage; related dangers: lascivious magazines, speech, movies, dances, and immodest dress (mixed swimming, shorts expose thigh, tight clothes, etc.).
 3. Irreverent, profane language; gambling; drink intoxicants.

VIII. Must Love God and Fellowman

- A. *Matt. 22:37-40 - Foundation of All God Teaches Us.*
 1. To love God, obey whatever He commands no matter what the cost.
 2. True love of fellowman requires instruction from God.
 3. "All the law and the prophets" imperative, no part of truth expendable.
- B. *Rom. 13:9-10 - Love Neighbor, Seek His Welfare.*
 1. Always seek to do him good not harm--God's Word teaches what is good, what is harmful.
 2. Seek his highest good by teaching him the gospel (1 Tim. 4:16).

Conclusion:

1. Each of us in this great battle for souls - only question: on which side, God or Satan?
2. Must put on whole armor of God, fight to the very end (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Tim. 4:1-8).
3. Desert Satan's army, enroll in God's army: faith in gospel, repent of sin, confess name of Christ, immersed in water; if err as Christian: repent, confess sin, pray.

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