

Warfare Jesus Way

– The Weapons
are Not Carnal
But are Mighty for...



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"The [Resurrection](#) Changes Everything!" Nik Ripkin

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THE THEME AND ISSUE OF 'SPIRITUAL WARFARE' IS A STAPLE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATIONS IN THE VAST AND VARIED PRAYER AND INTERCESSORY NETWORKS, AND UNDERSTANDABLY SO, BECAUSE IT IS BELIEVED TO BE THEIR FIELD OF EXPERTISE.

However, these themes and the ensuing conversations spill over into (and engaged by) the wider Christian community when that community is disquieted – usually prompted by a disturbing socio-political issue or event that bumps into their culture. None more so than when the erosion of Christian values is seeing yet another gouging storm approach. This of course, is not a bad thing – the defence of best practice values (and the Judeo-Christian values system has still not been bettered in the public square) is a worthy cause for such action.

The old hymn, “*onward Christian Soldiers*”, springs to mind whenever I hear the subject emerge.

And as rousing a tune as it may be, it's verses 3 to 5 that are rarely remembered, but for the sake of easy access, I've copied them here.

*Like a mighty army
moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
where the saints have trod;
we are not divided,
all one body we,
one in hope and doctrine,
one in charity.*

*What the saints established
that I hold for true.
what the saints believed,
that I believe too.
Long as earth endureth,
men the faith will hold,
kingdoms, nations, empires,
in destruction rolled.*

*Crown and thrones may perish,
kingdoms rise and wane,
but the Church of Jesus
constant will remain;
gates of hell can never
'gainst that Church prevail;
we have Christ's own promise,
and that cannot fail.*

Refrain:

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
with the cross of Jesus [the
Anchor Point and Rosetta stone
of all Doctrine]
going on before!*



It is a rousing hymn and has, for the most part, sound doctrine. The motif of 'war' though can conjure many uncomfortable images in our more 'civilized' western democracies. This can also be attributed to our very visual repertoire of the bloodiest of all centuries, the 20th – grotesque and egregious. Incidentally, it was the 20th century that saw more catastrophic violence and loss of life than *all the conflicts ever recorded in history prior* to that century. And what is important to note, is that it was Godless, secular actors who perpetrated this almost incalculable carnage – two of these actors were communists, all three were totalitarians – Hitler, Stalin and Mao – but I digress.

The prolific novelist and writer [Ernest Hemingway](#) made an interesting comment about war, whilst clearly not in any way in favour of them, he understood the need to win them if so embroiled;

“ONCE WE HAVE A WAR THERE IS ONLY ONE THING TO DO. IT MUST BE WON. FOR DEFEAT BRINGS WORSE THINGS THAN ANY THAT CAN EVER HAPPEN IN **WAR.”**

Therefore, arises one significant question; what does this Christian warfare look like and entail for the unseasoned prayer war recruit?

Old Testament models, modes and methods – shadows and types

THE OLD COVENANT OF SCRIPTURE IS RICH WITH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ALL AFFIRMING AND REFLECTING MUCH OF THE NATURE OF DESPOTIC KINGDOMS AND THE ADVERSARIAL MODES OF CONQUER OR BE CONQUERED.

Time and space here, does not permit the detailed investigation into the spiritual and subsequent sources of this state of affairs; suffice to say this was never the intent or design of the Creator God of the Bible – but a mode that did not take by surprise the Omniscient God, and one He had to deal with, along with many of the other capricious, and more often than not, callous and recalcitrant acts.

However, the Triune God had to, as only the free will bestowing, relationship focused and collaborative Deity could, work His remarkable sovereignty into demonstrating a better way and leading the world, be it ever so slowly, away from this domination model, and into a willing surrender to His best practice dominion.

The God of the Bible, we understand has hosts of angels, with *warrior* capacity, and regardless of that, He, with the breath of His nostrils, could incinerate entire cities but chooses not to exercise that capacity to obliterate (except for exceptional circumstances), rather to regulate, recalibrate or most importantly, emancipate.

(El Shaddai) *The All-Sufficient God*, is always looking to use all His vast resources to set people free of the activities that kill, steal and destroy – these are always the work of the Evil One.

The following records show an array of Old Testament 'battle' strategies and outcomes, but all in a collaborative context. Yes, at times it was mostly God, other times mostly man, but all were about setting all those who wanted to or were in relationship with the God of the best practice, to be emancipated from that which kills, steals and destroys.

- Egyptians – [Exodus 14](#)
- Jericho – [Joshua 5:13-6:27](#)
- Gideon and the Midianites – [Judges 7](#)
- David & Goliath – [1 Samuel 17](#)
- [Asa and the Ethiopians](#)
- Jehoshaphat and Moab – [2 Chronicles 20](#)
- Hezekiah and the Assyrians – [2 Kings 18-19](#)

The list can go on, but you get the point. Again, I want us to remember the context in history of this Old Covenant framework and the default position of the lost world (those not knowing the God of Creation) which was conquer, dominate, control, acquire, accumulate and subsequently, govern their way.

At the risk of being repetitive, this is always the modus operandi of the god of this world. ([John 10:10](#))



The King of King's Manifestation of 'Warfare'

SO, WHAT IS WARFARE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW COVENANT, THE CURRENT DISPENSATION?

This same God – who has not changed, but only seeks to bring us back to his perfect plan – is ever looking to transform His most precious creation to conform with His own image and return to that relationship of trust, surrender and communion that existed pre-fall in the 'Garden of Eden'

At the right time this Interventionist God inserted Himself in human history to 'shift gears' as it were, in changing those modes, models and motifs into His Kingdom ways and clearly delineating them from man's kingdom ways.

We now find ourselves, in this time in His-story in a different [dispensation](#) if we enter the New Covenant.

The '[Lion of the Tribe of Judah](#)', the Son of God, the Second Person in the Triune Godhead has made manifest a new mode, model and mandate.

He set this new 'Way' of warfare in motion and did so by a most graphic demonstration on the Cross. Bought with the most precious of all blood – but not in killing of but dying for.

Arguably, the most well-known passage in Scripture on spiritual warfare is found in Paul's second letter to the Church at Corinth – [a place and church very much in need of such activity](#).

FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH [AS MORTAL MEN], WE ARE NOT CARRYING ON OUR [SPIRITUAL] WARFARE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH AND USING THE WEAPONS OF MAN. ⁴ THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT PHYSICAL [WEAPONS OF FLESH AND BLOOD – GEARED TO THE BASE NATURE OF MAN]. OUR WEAPONS ARE DIVINELY POWERFUL FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF FORTRESSES. ⁵ WE ARE DESTROYING SOPHISTICATED ARGUMENTS [THAT PEOPLE TRY AND ESCAPE TO AND HIDE IN] AND EVERY EXALTED AND PROUD THING THAT SETS ITSELF UP AGAINST THE [TRUE] KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND WE ARE TAKING EVERY THOUGHT AND PURPOSE CAPTIVE TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST, ⁶ BEING READY TO PUNISH EVERY ACT OF DISOBEDIENCE, WHEN YOUR OWN OBEDIENCE [AS A CHURCH] IS COMPLETE.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 [Amplified Bible](#)

This passage to my reading, is more about posture, attitude and character, which enable us to most effectively use the 'weapons' of our warfare. In fact, it is our Christ imbued character, posture and the humility, holiness and hope that enables the 'weaponizing' of The Word and purposes of God which enable that *tearing down* capacity. If you like it is more like an '[E.M.P' device](#) and not a nuclear bomb – but to 'pull down' what?

Well, Paul gives both definition and deployment

1. Strongholds – not physical structures or even institutions or strategies (perhaps some of the latter), rather the 'arguments' that set themselves up against the [knowledge of God](#)
2. How? 'capturing' through obedience and punishing disobedience in both us and the church which we are [living stones](#) in.

This is first and foremost about us, removing the plank from our own eye, before attempting to remove the spec in another's. However, it is also about ensuring that the 'leaven' of the world and the flesh does not ferment in the living and to be spotless, Bride of Christ.

What then could these 'weapons' be?

TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE ONE WHO GAINED THE ULTIMATE VICTORY IN THIS COSMIC BATTLE. AT RISK OF BEING A LITTLE RETRO, MAY I ASK – WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? OR MORE PRECISELY, WHAT **DID** JESUS DO?

Calvary was the culmination of a mission, a life-long manifestation of the nature of both the Creator God and His Kingdom as was intended in Eden.

Love, and no I'm not referring to the ubiquitous, powerless and unholy version so readily embraced by a shallow and sentimental culture, but [Divine Love and](#) the Righteousness, Truth and Obedience that is enveloped and under-girded by the Grace, Compassion and Mercy, that all coalesced at the Cross.

Yet, there is still another important 'weapon' and one that enables the above to actually be deployed well, and is the embodiment of it – The Church – the ['Pillar and Foundation of the Truth'](#).

¹⁰ HIS INTENT WAS THAT NOW, THROUGH THE CHURCH, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN TO THE RULERS AND AUTHORITIES IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS, ¹¹ ACCORDING TO HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE THAT HE ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. ¹² IN HIM AND THROUGH FAITH IN HIM WE MAY APPROACH GOD WITH FREEDOM AND CONFIDENCE. ¹³ I ASK YOU, THEREFORE, NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED BECAUSE OF MY SUFFERINGS FOR YOU, WHICH ARE YOUR GLORY. ¹⁴ FOR THIS REASON I KNEEL BEFORE THE FATHER, ¹⁵ FROM WHOM EVERY FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH DERIVES ITS NAME. ¹⁶ I PRAY THAT OUT OF HIS GLORIOUS RICHES HE MAY STRENGTHEN YOU WITH POWER THROUGH HIS SPIRIT IN YOUR INNER BEING, ¹⁷ SO THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH. AND I PRAY THAT YOU, BEING ROOTED AND ESTABLISHED IN LOVE, ¹⁸ MAY HAVE POWER, TOGETHER WITH ALL THE LORD'S HOLY PEOPLE, TO GRASP HOW WIDE AND LONG AND HIGH AND DEEP IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST, ¹⁹ AND TO KNOW THIS LOVE THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE—THAT YOU MAY BE FILLED TO THE MEASURE OF ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. ²⁰ NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN ALL WE ASK OR IMAGINE, ACCORDING TO HIS POWER THAT IS AT WORK WITHIN US

Ephesians 3:10-20 New International Version

The ‘mature’ Church – and that is an important qualifier – is the weapon that ‘makes manifest’.

That is why the Enemy of humanity – the Adversary – is happy for ‘*Decisions over Disciples*’ and breast-feeding babies over maturing believers. You see, it is only the mature who can make manifest. Only the mature seed that is fully viable and ready to reproduce that is be the ‘*grain of wheat*’ that falls into the ground and multiplies (Ephesians 6:12-20). Only the mature can put the armour on *and keep it on as God intended*, not the flesh intended.

When it comes to the armour of God, it is not a don and remove accessory, it is supposed to be a permanent fixture. At what point would any Disciple of Christ take off, Salvation, Truth or Righteousness? (Helmet – Belt – Breastplate?) Here in lies our second, or perhaps more aptly put, tantamount issue; is it a lack of maturity that sees this armour often ‘put off’ and maturity stifled, or is it immaturity that predisposes us to disrobing? A question for another piece perhaps?

The Church is the key, and it is the collective maturing Disciples of Christ who are the ‘living stones’ which make up this globally purposed *pillar and*



foundation of Divine Truth. It is not only the Plumbline for humanity, but also the restoring, raising up and releasing hospital, haven, home and higher education community for world.

A significant, and arguably ultimate, component of this maturation process in the Church 'stones' manifestation of Christ's ultimate perfection in life is death to self. A component we in the Western Church particularly have real difficulty embracing.

Reverend Andrew Murray in his timeless essay [*Humility*](#) shines a spotlight on this incredibly uncomfortable Discipleship calling;

HUMILITY IS THE PATH TO DEATH, BECAUSE IN DEATH IT GIVES THE HIGHEST PROOF OF ITS PERFECTION. HUMILITY IS THE BLOSSOM OF WHICH DEATH TO SELF IS THE PERFECT FRUIT. JESUS HUMBLING HIMSELF UNTO DEATH AND OPENED THE PATH IN WHICH WE TOO MUST WALK. AS THERE WAS NO WAY FOR HIM TO PROVE HIS SURRENDER TO GOD TO THE UTMOST OR TO GIVE UP AND RISE OUT OF OUR HUMAN NATURE TO THE GLORY OF THE FATHER BUT THROUGH DEATH, SO IT IS WITH US. HUMILITY MUST LEAD US TO DIE TO SELF: SO, WE PROVE HOW WHOLLY WE HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES UP TO IT AND TO GOD; SO ALONE WE ARE FREED FROM OUR FALLEN NATURE AND FIND THE PATH THAT LEADS TO LIFE IN GOD, TO THAT FULL BIRTH OF THE NEW NATURE, OF WHICH HUMILITY IS THE BREATH AND THE JOY.

*WE HAVE SPOKEN OF WHAT JESUS DID FOR HIS DISCIPLES WHEN HE COMMUNICATED HIS RESURRECTION LIFE TO THEM, WHEN IN THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, GLORIFIED AND ENTHRONED MEEKNESS, HE ACTUALLY CAME FROM HEAVEN HIMSELF TO DWELL IN THEM. **HE WON THE POWER TO DO THIS THROUGH DEATH: IN ITS INMOST NATURE, THE LIFE HE IMPARTED WAS A LIFE OUT OF DEATH, A LIFE THAT HAD BEEN SURRENDERED TO DEATH AND BEEN WON THROUGH DEATH.*** [emphasis added]

A key element in leading us to this *surrender* is understanding Kingdom priorities and ordering them aright. It is the Apostle Paul who continues to focus on and emphasize what I see as the [ultimate agenda of God](#), and of course, following the Kingdom Founder's priority.

In Matthew 6:33 we see the Author of Salvation and [Cornerstone](#) of this Church tell us in plain and simple what terms our highest priority must be – **Seek *first* God's Kingdom and His Righteousness...** God's sphere of influence and His best practice standard for living. This is the priority pursuit. As stated, Paul follows this understanding of 'First Things' and states that, arguably, the most important set of gifts given to the Church – The *Domata* – were not things, but agents. And this makes perfect sense when we are dealing with the Father of Creation; Author of and enamoured with relationship and community.

The generic letter sent to all churches in the first century was the instructional piece we know as Ephesians. In chapter 4 and verses 11-13 Paul writes about this deployment of gifts and the intent of them.

Who was it that gave us these gifts?

- ☑ Verse 11 – None other than the Son of God: *So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,*

For what purpose were these personified resources given?

- ☑ Verse 12 – *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up* (notice it's about training, preparing, resourcing the 'living stones' to do works of service and in so doing this Church is built up – the pillar and mainstay of the Truth grows.)

What is the end intent – the unshifting goal of all this investment?

- ☑ Verse 13 – *until we all reach **unity in the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

First point to note is that the **unity of the Spirit** exists for all those Born Again – The Holy Spirit is in them, and He is not disunified. Paul makes this clear in verse three of this same chapter, we are to simply *maintain* that unity (not create it), but we can only do that in the **bond of peace**, which in turn is being developed by our mature Divine service of one another. Secondly, the key outcome of this profound investment is *complete maturation*. This clear intent and action never abates – ever.

It is only in maturation, ever progressive, that we conform more and more to the stature of Christ, and our knowledge of the Kingdom grows. And again, the world sees the Church that looks, speaks and acts like Jesus Christ.

Are you still following the imperative in all this?

It is the Christ imbued and reflecting Church, maturing to the fullness of maturity; it is the entitlement rejecting, service embracing, holy love demonstrating humble servants of heaven which is a powerful weapon that truly is mighty for the tearing down of the strongholds of hell.

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