

Warrington

1/9/65

"The Church of God"

9/26/54

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Scripture Lesson:- Ephesians 6:10-19.

Text:- Ephesians 6:- 10.

Introduction:- We sometimes sing, "Like a mighty army moves the church of God". Some do not believe that the church of God is moving like a mighty army. Nevertheless, the hosts of sin are pressing hard, and I believe God's army continues to march and will ultimately triumph in victory.

Jesus Christ is the captain of the army and every disciple is a soldier. Soldiers must be seasoned to hardships, if they are to win battles against a strong enemy. When the armies of ancient Rome became soft, amid the luxuries of conquest, Rome fell under the invasion of the barbarian tribes of northern Europe.

God conditions his army for hardships. The victory is not for the weak, vacillating, and indecisive. The warfare of the Christian soldier is waged against a strong, rugged, and cunningly deceptive enemy. Satan the arch-enemy of the human race goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Satan has no conscience, no mercy, and no milk of human kindness in his character. His chief purpose is to spread all manner of wreckage, ruin and destruction in the earth. Rivers of innocent blood are a delight to his eye, and the strife and discords of men are music to his ear. He is the sworn enemy of all righteousness. His chief purpose is the destruction of all good and supplanting the good with the reign of all that is evil.

I.

God's people are engaged in a warfare against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. The mighty army of evil is commanded and directed by an arch-intelligence, surpassing in wisdom and cunning ingenuity the combined resources of the wisest and strongest of

the human race.

The captain and leader of the hosts of evil is described by John in the book of Revelation in these words: "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit." (Rev. 9:11). The wisdom of the wisest and the strength of the strongest, engaged in combat with such a titanic army of evil, has little chance of success.

But the captain of God's army, the Lord Jesus Christ, is more than a match for Satan's army. He is the Almighty one. All power has been given unto him in heaven and in earth. All wisdom and the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth in him. He is "the mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow upon his head and his face as it were the sun, and his feet pillars of fire." (Rev 10:1). His strength and resources are far beyond the needs of his disciples. His resources are inexhaustable.

II.

The weapons of God's army are supplied by the chief captain, the Lord Jesus Christ. The weapons are not carnal but spiritual. They are not visible but invisible. The invisible forces, even in the realm of nature, are the mightiest forces. The things which are unseen, such as the law of gravity, electricity, and nuclear energy, are greater than the forces which are seen.

The invisible resources of Christ are sufficient to equip his disciples for the pulling down of the strongholds of evil and to march against the armies of Satan. He who holds the key of hell and death and is alive forever more, holds the key for every battle and every conquest in which his disciples will be called upon to engage. The vast inexhaustable resources of Christ are a sufficient guarantee that every need of his people can be met in him. The inexhaustable resources of Jesus are such as to guarantee the ultimate triumph and success of those who trust him implicitly and obey him completely.

Jesus promised, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Hell is powerful, but Christ is more powerful. The devil is a deceiver, leading men on the broad road to death and destruction. Christ is a receiver, accepting all morally bankrupt souls who come to him through faith. The devil will keep up his warfare until he is bound and cast into the bottomless pit, but the devil cannot ultimately prevail against the armies of the living God. God's army marches in triumphant conquest across the centuries. In the final events of the titanic conflict between the armies of Satan and God we have a significant description of the triumph of the armies of God in the book of Revelation.

"There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world and I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." (Rev. 12:7-11).

The mighty victory of the hosts of heaven in conflict with Satan and the forces of hell portrays the victory that is possible through Christ for the children of God, in every conflict with Satan and the hosts of hell.

Conclusion:- Christ has provided a victory that is full and complete and triumphant for those who are his disciples. While it is true that many fall short of this full and complete victory, it is no fault of Christ. He has made every provision for the hearts of his children to be cleansed and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians says, "Ye are complete in him!" (Col. 2:10).

A soldier must lay aside every weight and encumbrance if he marches to conquests in an army. Likewise in the army of the Lord every weight, encumbrance and besetment must be put off, in order to march in full triumph in the army of the living God. The Scriptures exhort us to lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us that we may even run the race that is set before us. It is only with our hearts cleansed from every sin, that we can render our highest service as good soldiers under the banner of the cross of Christ.