



The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

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Fighting The Good Fight Of Faith

By
Jeff Haught

On August 25, 1965 I was born into a world at war. It's true there was a war going on in Southeast Asia at the time (among other places), However, I am not speaking of being born into a physical war between men or nations. I was born into a world engaged in a spiritual war between that which is good and that which is evil.

As followers of Christ, we must recognize that we were all born into such a war, and that we all are called to become engaged in that struggle between good and evil. This is readily seen in the command addressed to every Christian in Jude 3, *"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."* That we are involved in a spiritual conflict should be inherently understood as well in Eph. 6:11, *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."*

The apostle Paul told Timothy to, *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were*

also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." There are many things we must keep in mind in fighting that good fight.

The Conflict Cannot Be Avoided

It is a given fact that controversy between Christians and the world is inevitable in our service to Christ. No matter how much we would like to avoid direct confrontation with the world, it cannot be avoided if one is going to truly live the Christian life. Some of the reasons for this are as follows:

1. Unlike the humanistic doctrine of "moral relativism, Jesus taught absolutes. *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6). He taught "either / or" choices. One either serves God or mammon (Matthew 6:24), is on the broad way or narrow way (7:13-14), is laying up treasure in heaven or on earth (6:18-21), is a true or false prophet (7:15-19), or has a foundation that is safe and secure or one that invites disaster (7:24-27).*
2. The teaching of Jesus is uniquely one of a kind and is not alterable or dependent on time or culture. *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word*

The Southeast

Church of Christ meets at:

35 Walnut Court

Mogadore, OH 44260

Phone: 330.628.7432

SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study: 10:00 am

Worship: 10:50 am

6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 pm

that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Any alteration of that word brings condemnation. *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."* (2 John 9). Christ's teaching is not open to compromise.

3. The apostles often found themselves involved in a struggle for the hearts of men. They reasoned, debated (Acts 17:2-3), and lived in a constant struggle against the

culture that surrounded them. We can expect to face the same challenges in doing so in our current day and age.

The Conflict First Starts Within

In the life of any Christian, one will face a struggle with those outside of Christ, and unfortunately, there are even times that one will face some conflict with those within the body of Christ. Yet the key in being successful during those trying circumstances is first to master the struggle that is going on inside of oneself. Every Christian is fundamentally in a struggle between two minds, dispositions, or attitudes that lie within him or her. Paul stated it this way, *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another”* (Galatians 5:16-17). We can only be successful reaching others for Christ, if we are first converted ourselves. *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will,”* (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Winning the conflict that is going on within ourselves will determine how successful we are in the “outward” conflicts, *“...first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the*

outside of them may be clean also,” (Matt. 23:25-26).

The key to *“fighting the good fight”* is for the soldier to win the war raging within.

The Conflict Must Be Fought Righteously

“I have fought the good fight....I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). This is a remarkable statement for it implies that it is entirely possible the struggle could be waged unrighteously if we are not careful.

Some may spend most of their lives involved in the wrong battles, including battles that do not matter or battles that never arrive at the right answer to a real problem. Others fight the right battles but in the process get discouraged, or completely lose their faith and stray from the course. Some start the good fight but lose their resolve to persevere in the struggle. It may not be outwardly apparent that they have given up, yet at the same time they have inwardly stopped contending.

Others fight the right battles, but in the process of fighting one battle after another, they intentionally or unintentionally learn to fight in a less than righteous manner. It should be noted that the term “good” in the above verse is also translated in other passages, “honest” (Luke 8:15) and “honorable” (Titus 3:8,14). Honor and honesty are necessary in striving to be holy and pleasing to God. The good soldier is set apart and consecrated unto the Lord for waging a good warfare. In all his living he is to show forth

the righteousness of his Savior and Redeemer. In other words, even when involved in the heat of battle he is to act in a manner that glorifies His Lord. *“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him,”* (Colossians 3:17). The challenge for any Christian is to fight the good fight of faith and remain honest, ethical, loving, concerned for the souls of men, patient, and spiritual while in the midst of battle.

We must remember 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.”* In the midst of this struggle, the Christian refuses to use less than righteous methods in contending for the faith.

We do not rely upon manipulation or a worldly craftiness, but rather our trust is in the power of the gospel message (Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 10:4).

We must refuse to lower ourselves to using carnal methods in trying to save souls.

We do not need to misrepresent error, or twist a verse of scripture in order to try to make our point.

We do not need to exaggerate, or attribute conclusions to those in error that they do not believe.

And, the fact that the person we are trying to teach may lose their temper does not permit us to do the same.

As Christian soldiers let us all endeavor to *“fight the good fight of faith”* so that we may *“lay hold on eternal life”* in the life to come.

-Jeff Haught