

# The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God. (ii) (Quality: Good)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 25 April 1976

Preacher: Bentley, James

- [ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord may be pleased to help us, we will continue with our morning text.
- You'll find it in the 2nd Ephesians to the Corinthians, chapter 10, verses 4 and 5.
- Chapter 10, in the 2nd Ephesians, verses 4 and 5. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, through the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imagination and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.
- As we said this morning, we will repeat again, where there's new life in the soul, where there is life in the soul, there will be a warfare.
- And it was warfare of such a nature that it will be between flesh and spirit.
- [ 1 : 37 ] It will be between that which is born of the flesh and that which comes of the new birth. The spirit and the flesh will not amalgamate.
- They cannot. There's a constant warfare that the spirit will maintain and prove to be victorious at last.
- But nevertheless, whilst the war is raging, there's many trials, temptations, many concerns that the spirit of the Lord have to know whether it is a lawful warfare, whether it is according to the word of God, whether we have been equipped for it.
- For we have read tonight, the old armor of God, put ye on the old armor of God. That means, friends, to not put on that which we feel will suit us best, that which we shall not have to put too much use, to be the old armor of God.
- First of all, you'll be put into that position of wanting and needing that support from heaven, that cover that you need against all temptation, against the world and the iniquity in your own heart.
- [ 3 : 23 ] So we said this morning, a man's foes are those of his own household. You and I were born with them.
- In our hearts, there was that natural birth, that which would be made powerfully known if grace was reached out.
- If it should be proved that God has brought us into this world, we have had a natural birth that is designed for us, a new birth, a spiritual birth.
- And as sure as he gives the power of nature, and does equip us in natural things, to meet natural desires and needs, so if we are born again, he will equip that new man with the armor that he stands in need of.
- It will be an equipment, friends, that will be well used. Of course, there are many in religion and many professions to be at war, that it's only usually, if there's no true religion, flesh lost in with flesh, gaining more of that which is of no worth.
- [ 5 : 00 ] That is flesh and spirit warring against that which God has been pleased to make known in our own soul.

In other words, the soul and spirit are engaged against the power of nature, against the power of the flesh.

As I said this morning, though the apostle, Paul, was well taught in religion as a Pharisee.

When he was born again, then he knew that he had not that equipment to meet him. And what was more, he had to live a life, as he said, the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who gave himself for me.

He loved me, who gave himself for me. That's what the apostle gained at his new birth. And it was questionable with him, now, what should he do with this change of life, change of heart, his true and saving knowledge of God, what should he do?

[ 6 : 33 ] Lord, he said, what wilt me, what wilt thou have me to do? This morning, then, we had a few thoughts upon these weapons, the weapons of our warfare, ours, that is those who've been born again.

If we've got a natural religion, we'd be very comfortable. there will not be many, curious, if any, wars.

It would be peace, a force, peace, that is satisfied. We could have enough religion to keep us going, and so, we may walk practically, calmly, unassiled, and the devil knows that he already has gained the victory.

But what a mercy, friends, when that new birth comes, God himself will be victorious over all and with his own work bring victory, life eternal, salvation, heaven to the warrior.

So, the question arises, what have we need of? What do we need as we go through life? We're told and we believe it.

[ 8 : 03 ] Prayer is a weapon, a wonderful weapon. It fights the very devil to see that weapon. Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.

It is that religion that must be taught, taught by want, taught by the application of the Holy Spirit.

So, when the Spirit comes in, he comes to man, and that man now has two natures, blessed, and spirit, and they war one against the other.

And so, there's that to be considered that it is for a divine part of sin. Sin is so strong in us, it's in our very vitals, in our blood.

No one has to be trained in sin. sin. We are born in it. No one has to be trained in doing wrong against your mighty God.

[ 9 : 21 ] It is our nature to go away from our very birth and to follow after the things of this life. God is in heaven.

Man is upon earth. the riches of God, all that the sinner stands in need of are in heaven. How can he ascend into heaven?

What can he do to bring down some heaven? He's helpless. Earth holds him. Holds him as our text suggests, as a stronghold.

stronghold. Our weakness is we can never pull down the stronghold that the devil and nature has built about us and in us.

A stronghold. He will be the stronghold in a time of trouble and temptation. The devil knows who tempts and even the Lord himself has said this morning he tries the righteous but there's no temptation from God.

[ 10 : 39 ] His trial is a trial of faith which he himself has given. It's his own work that he has and proves to his people what he's really doing for them.

put them in need of all that can find in Christ seeing that in his salvation is all that their souls can indeed are.

The stronghold yes he has promised to be a stronghold and no man can pull it down and we ourselves have no real readiness in the flesh pull it down.

It was with us at birth it remains with us and the long last pulling down has come to the error of death.

The devil must give way Christ is there to save us. What he has taught to make clear in that day he will be their salvation he will be their guide even unto death but all this friends cannot be passed through and learnt as the him writer says as the schoolboy learnt his path.

[ 12:13 ] must be taught as the spirit and the spirit gives life and the spirit and the truth so we sometimes sing spirit and the truth come down make known to us salvation work make it real to us for the spirit of God alone can do it and the strongholds that have been built up in our own nature in our own life for man is a fallen creature the spirit meets him the operation of grace God brings to work in his soul to prove to that poor sinner he has been born again it's a great mercy friends because some would show you you must have a religion that's kind peaceful leaves you alone gives you wisdom how to get on in the world and do good and kind towards your fellow creature a natural religion is born of the flesh and there's nothing to oppose it in ourselves if we can faster and build up this natural religion we shall do it we shall endeavour to do it that if we are born again the old man of sin will fight against the new man yes the elder shall serve the younger but not without struggling fighting not without the armour of God being worn then we have reserved this fifth verse for a few words this evening casting down imagination the margin says there's reason if we have been born again but that new birth has been made man again the devil will tempt us with many imaginations and many reasons and we are tried often one reasoning goes on if I'm his if I'm his why am

I that and the vision and imagination will be strong and it will be a trial to God's people they thought the work was right they confessed it to be right that the imagination the reason brought in by the power our temptation that surely God would not deal with me that and if I'm righteous do not things be different with me well I said this morning the wondrous serious solemn lesson worked that the daughter Carchus experienced when he was struck down on his evil journey how he was changed in heart and practice and yet afterwards when he viewed his state by nature and the solemn temptations that he had he said he said oh wretched man that I am who can who shall who will deliver me from this body of sin and death grace may enter your heart and enter mine which so be your soul favor that we shall carry about with us a body of sin and death so many go forth in the religious world they're very bold and they're very decided they tell you that they are

Christians they tell you some of them where they were born again where they began to serve the Lord and the engagements of Christian work that they've entered into so all together they feel they're in a very comfortable position they feel heaven is there because they imagine yes but not this imagination this is brought about by the spirit work that they have all in nature to seem to suggest it is spiritual and yet no light in their soul when they were born again when man is born again he's born in the image of Christ Christ enters into his heart and there Christ must reign that there's a casting down of imagination and what is to be why to bring every I thing through nothing to bring it down that it jorts against the knowledge of God now that's a solemn grace and precious promise let us ask the question may the good spirit ask us this question what do you know in your life what have you felt where you can say it's granting and made me to know

God this God acknowledge God the Holy Spirit at a place planted when the Lord was about to leave his disciples he said I will send the spirit the comforter he will take the things of mine and he will reveal them unto you the knowledge of God friends brought to a sinner by the Holy Spirit is a saving knowledge that there is a knowledge of God you can get it by reading the Bible you can get it by being associated is a religious thing and you can get the knowledge of God and not a saving knowledge and what is that but reception imagination and and that which may be an imagination you're living upon it you're not fried over it you're not greatly concerned you've been religious many years you've attended in the means of grace you know the truth you know good options and the devil will deceive you with it but there's got to be a casting down a knowledge of God whereby you're shown there's something you must start with something that will never take you to heaven it'll take you back and forward to the chapel but it'll never take you to heaven it's that knowledge that the devil impart you say does the devil know he does when he tempted the Lord of life and glory he brought the word of God he tried to tempt

Christ with that which was written written he said it is written he acted with a very solemn and strong temptation he can enter into our hearts we may so we know it's the truth we've learnt it we've heard it many times and we agree with that the Lord said it is written again when the devil tempts you or I to lean upon that which is of a fleshly thought and a fleshly knowledge may the good spirit come say listen that it is written again thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart and him alone shalt thou love much imagination and this weariness of the flesh and concern and reasoning is in the heart of the child of God it's got to be cast down it exalts itself so high and then if it was a path in knowledge you could soon dismiss it that imagination so strong it exalts itself against the knowledge of God and

[ 22 : 14 ] God's knowledge is this he knows you and he knows me he knows just where we are he knows what he's done for us he knows what he's withheld from us he knows what he's put us in the want of it and he knows which he's taken hold of it is only of a fleshly source oh our need for men and how much warfare there will be engaged when these two great forces meet one another imagination and reality real sincerity and earnestness our understanding thought of the spirit whereas there may be much that we learn after the traditional man a child can grow up religiously because of its early religious training

I would say this to those that are young your parents religion may be good but their religion will not take you to a sentence you yourself must be born again and they must be cast out of you that in nature nature be cautious your parents have shown you and taught you your sight and sound for time and for eternity no there must be a warfare some more violent than others some wars longer than others as they are in nature so they are in grace they come against two powerful forces the victory has already decided the spirit will overcome the flesh will be conquered and the imagination cast down oh to imagine it in sense you can do that as your mind wanders on you think of this possibility you think of this as a suggestion you see things with your natural sight you understand with a natural learning you have a religion that's born of the flesh and so when the spirit tries to work and when it is real it's made known to the child of

God and that which is born of the flesh must be passed down but what a long life it is what a long war to have and how the devil may have the last troll even of our last breath almost we're not secure in ourselves any moment or any time of life we are secure in him who has attained the victory and overcome the devil for eternity must be the loss of God's people in heaven and that which was the imagination must be passed out passed out destroyed rendered powerless and now our mind goes a little to that which we read tonight so says the puzzle we've got this warfare if so be we're one of it and the armor is not that it's just to be hung on the wall brought into the study or where you quietly read the word of

God no it's brought right and put on you put on the old armor of God you may say well I keep it very clean I keep it very clean and well polished it can be well seen on one of God's people it can be well seen that my life and heart has been changed it can be well seen I am a Christian in this world my armor has been well polished but it says nothing about the polishing it says put it on put it on it may have many disfigments this armor it has been through war and you find today friends you are not such a good looking warrior as it was at the beginning bold you might have been told to say what you are whom you are and whom you serve the devil comes to you and his work is to get service from you and your armor must be seen to be strong enough right enough worn rightly to overcome the power of temptation yes this is the armor put on the old armor of that you may be able to stand stand when in the evil day in the evil day not when you're feeling comfortable in the flesh not when your religion is so fleeting not when you're so lustily singing the hymn but no when you're sorely thriving feeling exposed to every temptation of the devil and you take a war hand says the apostle then put on the old armor gun and he names it you know from head to foot yes helmet recharging with the gospel of peace yes there's a war in life and the war in the spirit and the war in the world and you're conscious of it all oh says someone

I don't do this and I don't do that and I'm going to live us a fluid believe us like that sounds good but where did we get it from you've got it without putting any armor on you're certain you imagine that you're right why shouldn't you be right you've always been to the house of God your parents taught you well why shouldn't you be right imagination that were not do cast it down cast it down because it exalts itself against the knowledge of God what God teaches a man oh he doesn't teach a man how good he is he doesn't teach him how nicely he can serve God in the world but he teaches him his degradation what a sinner he is that in mercy as the man has been able to wear this armor then there's the hope the helmet is there in his mind and in his heart has sent this hope a living hope a powerful hope a powerful hope that is sure as

[ 30 : 55 ] God has sent him in the world so God's mercy will accompany him saving grace has met the man or woman and the helmet has put on they have a good hope through grace some smile at them hope they say haven't you got further than hope can't you say God is yours what sort of religion is that face near open oh they don't want that helmet because nothing does destroy what's in their mind but that evil and the suggestions and what enters your mind through the eye gate and ear gate that must be overcome and so there must be a casting out that put beyond the old armor of

God we suggested this morning now for David in that solemn time that blessed time for him and for Israel when he came before Goliath he could not wear King Saul's armor he never tried it but he did know what he could come to he came in the name of the God of Israel and that's a wonderful name friend almighty eternal loving yes knowing who are his knowing who they serve knowing the reality or otherwise of their religion it's a knowledge friend but the exalting itself against the knowledge of God where does it leave the sinner well he has no helmet on his shield of faith is never known he never had saving faith as faith then would still be there there can be little faith there can be great faith it's always

God gives little or much but it's war the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and the shield goes after over that heart covers up the evils there and the sinner camp that nothing will penetrate this armour of and shield of faith it's God solving it to keep me in the day of battle bringing me safely through at last the helmet and the shield and now that's the walk what a walk friend sometimes no doubt you feel that if you could walk over again you would do better but oh friends it's God's own work and he must have all the praise you know if you can live over again

God would never do better than he has done for you you stop and think was he with me then at that time when I fell was he with me when I went to pray well he said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee that's what he says to his people and all the deceptions and imaginations of the natural heart bring the man not destruction not evil that a saving knowledge of God his knowledge friends is saving born into this world you can be born of godly parents in a godly home and you can go through life and never receive the saving knowledge of god you say

I read the bible so you might but does the bible read you does it tell you the truth as you stand before god when you do know the truth then let you use imagination to its utmost stretch it will never satisfy god's work he chose you as one of his in eternity he chose you he meets you in time the time appointed rolls on a page not to propose that calls by grace he makes himself known he overcomes the power of the enemy he has equipped you with the arm of righteousness and he would never leave his people the sovereignty of his choice is sure and certain the operation of the spirit is life and brings salvation that's just a trial friend that's a trial and charged with the gospel of peace wonderful friends that is a big charge of the gospel what has the gospel done for you did he done for me where you say hope it led me to him

[ 37 : 08 ] I hope that he has done something for me where I can say the Lord truly has been mindful of me well the apostle goes on a little further and it says he brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ have you been brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ you have read of his commands they have been preached perhaps not so often as they might be but they have been and they hold you you can't get away from them they are the word of God he said if you love me keep my commandment it's not what you call yourself many say I'm a Baptist and a strict Baptist but their feet never touch the water

I may be very plain but at the same time that's true isn't it that's quite true but ought to be captivated brought into captivity held because you must serve him he holds you as a soldier to obedience he holds you as a subject in love and mercy this is the way he walked in he when he he tried and went through the waters Jordan he did yes he performed the father's will and the father's letter this is my beloved son to whom I am well pleased when he was transfigured on the mountain and his glory was seen by the men presence again the voice spoke this is my beloved son whom

I am well pleased he himself was before the men the prophet as he is in the world of God in the prophecy his glory shines he comes on earth transforms himself and shows himself in all his glory in salvation in his gospel and the gospel comes to a poor sinner to heart and it holds him in captivity have you broken away from that captivity or since you have have you ever been held to it that you must do good in obedience to Christ have you ever been exercised to know whether the manifestation of his love is in your heart is there anything in the word of God you could do without him can you get to heaven with part of the armor remembrance of me but after you do it you do so forth, by death shall I come friends are not preaching or trying to anything novel not at all, this is the truth and it is good that you should sound forward, may the

Lord, blessed Lord, close it with terror and don't look upon it as a man's work, it's only a man's voice and a sinful man at that but oh, if the things of God hold you in captivity you can't get away from it that what God has spoken is your answer if you love me, you say keep my command oh no, not me it's only a little extra that some believers like to practice friends, it is not a trial of practice it's a trial of faith and if faith is working in your heart that lively faith will lead you to Christ look at the men and women in want look at the woman whose taste is so bad and that her face is so strong if I can but touch see him as his gum

I should be made old she got an urgent case she couldn't pass that by whilst the pain in her body was there you can't pass it by if your soul is hating you must say if I let that tap him I shall be old I shall be in that path of obedience which he has commanded yes all God ordinances are blessed ordinances you know we should be stronger healthier at the denomination if more were held in captivity to the obedience of Christ you may be obeying openly outwardly the form of a religion that just speaks of the obedience to Christ he's gone first and he's taken all his people to heaven with him

[ 43 : 21 ] Jesus my Lord to heaven is God says one of you I've picked my hopes upon and you pursue that narrow way he says I will be with you even unto the end well we shall have to leave it but let us read our text through again for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God through the pulling down of strongholds casting down imaginations or reasoning and every high thing that he talks to tell against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ amen together powerful and and to the whatever