

***The 7-Fold Excellencies of the Mystery:
“Our Heavenly & Spiritual Warfare Under Grace”
Part I***

Our Scripture for Today:

Eph. 6:10-20

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you **the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day**, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, **having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;**

15 And **your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

16 Above all, taking **the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**

17 **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [utterance] of God:**

18 **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;**

19 And for me, **that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,**

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: **that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

Review:

As we saw in our last gathering here, Paul’s teaching regarding the Rapture of the Church which is His Body is dispensational and so we should not be surprised that the apostle of the Gentiles would use the word “mystery” in referring to it several times. It is truly distinct, therefore, for other teachings in the scriptures, and we must rightly divide the word in order to properly understand and fully grasp its significance.

We examined each of four dimensions of Excellency #6: The Catching Up (or, the Rapture) of the Church which is His Body:

1. ***This Teaching Provides The Foundation of Our Encouragement***
(1 Thess. 4)
2. ***This Teaching is Dispensational at Its Heart***
(1 Thess. 5)
3. ***This Teaching Requires Right Division for Its Understanding***
(2 Thess. 2)
4. ***This Teaching is the Revelation of Secrets At the Heart of Our Rapture/Translation***
(1 Cor. 15)

These glorious teachings of Paul concerning our “catching up”, our “rapture”, have been a great blessing to me. I hope they have been to you as well. In them Paul exhorts us to grasp fully by faith these truths concerning our future glorification together with our Lord Jesus Christ. He even in 2 Timothy 4 writes that our future glory may be further enhanced based on how we respond to this teaching:

2 Tim. 4:7-8

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Praise the Lord for our blessed hope! And to know that a crown of righteousness awaits us. How encouraging! And the blessedness is even increased, he writes here, “if we love his appearing”!

Introduction

Today we begin with our Seventh Excellency of the Sacred Secret revealed to and through the apostle Paul, Our heavenly & spiritual warfare - under grace.

There is much talk about spiritual warfare today and I suppose there always has been, since Satan’s greatest desire is to oppose the work of God through his people. So spiritual warfare is always set before us our challenge, since Satan would always want the victory for himself. Much discernment is needed in this regard as we shall see.

Some questions up front seem appropriate (most of which we hope are answered in our fellowship here):

- **What IS true and authentic spiritual warfare?**
 - *How would we define it? What is its source, power, and proper operation? What can we do to be victorious in it, should it come our way?*
- *There is much language in Paul's letters that reference spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:3, & 12; 1 Tim. 1:18, etc. and surely Eph. 6). So its nature and reality are revealed in scripture, even if we should not know of it in our own life and practice.*
- *Consider that the key word of this revelation, "mystery", is found here in verse 19! This indicates that the revelation concerning spiritual warfare through Paul is "different" from that given in other parts of the Scriptures and it is to be dispensationally understood.*
 - *But what could be really new about our spiritual warfare in this dispensation, you may fairly ask? How could something this fundamental have changed so significantly?*
 - *And, do these changes mean that those who are saved but in rebellion against Paul are in a very weakened position spiritually, since they cannot wage spiritual warfare successfully?*
- *Many today, leaders in the churches, are speaking boldly about this. There is great disagreement between their positions on this important scriptural doctrine (charismatics, pentecostals, and many fundamentalists easily come to mind), so we need to be able to answer them from scripture itself. **AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE NEED TO WAGE THE WARFARE SET BEFORE US WITH ALL THE POWER OF GOD AND NOT RENDERED INEFFECTIVE IN BATTLE BY BELIEVING SATAN'S LIES.***

Our Outline for Today:

- #1: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Revealed**
- #2: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Opposed**
- #3: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Defended**
- #4: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery -Still Boldly Proclaimed?**

I. The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Revealed

[READ] Eph. 6:10-12

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against

powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- ***“The wiles of the devil”*: Our primary enemy of course, is Satan himself. But he has a lot of support, doesn’t he . . .**
- ***“but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world [age]” - and he that are. So many are aligned against us.***
- ***“against spiritual wickedness in high places [in the heavenlies - see Eph. 1 & 2 and Col. 1, for example]” - By Satan and his emissaries, whose dwelling place is in the heavenlies, we are so often attacked, but also by the tools of this age referred to here in a general statement. This includes the age-dwellers themselves, whether false teachers, evil brethren, or unbelievers. Interestingly, only the KJV of all other early English translations uses the words “high places” here. The rest translate this with “in heavenly places” or “in the heavenlies”.***

THE QUESTION: What is this conflict, this warfare, and how is it different from the spiritual warfare of other times, seasons, dispensations?

#1: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Revealed - It is our reality!

II. The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Opposed

[READ] Eph. 6:12-13

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you **the whole armour of God**, that ye may be able to withstand **in the evil day**, and having done all, to stand.

- ***“the whole armour of God” - This refers to the entire set of weapons at our disposal in this life, whether defensive or offensive. The apostle will proceed to outline them in the verses here.***
- ***“the evil day” - the time of attack***
 - Eph. 6:13 - εν τη ημερα τη πονηρα - ***Lit. “in the day the evil one”, with an article of previous reference perhaps? This may be a reference to Eph. 5:16 where we find ημεραι πονηραι***
- ***Note the reference to our foes in this battle as identified here and the***

exhortation given:

- **“Wrestle” -**
 - not against flesh and blood
 - but against principalities
 - against powers
 - against the rulers of the darkness of this world
 - against spiritual wickedness in high places

- **What a list indeed. We must compare with other such lists given in Paul’s letters: Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21, 3:10; 1 Cor. 15:24; Col. 1:16, 2:10, 2:15. Let’s look at just one of these:**
 - **[READ] Col 1:13-18**

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

 - ***This is a reference to the original creation of the heavenly spirit beings and to their setting in place in the heavenlies in the positions of great power we read of elsewhere in scripture.***
 - ***But Christ Jesus is above all, and certainly Satan is included, even though Satan has been given authority in a special way to the earth.***

 - **[READ] 1 Cor. 15:24** Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
 - ***Here the completion of the plan to defeat Satan and his***

minions as all rule and authority is demonstrably placed under Christ himself, even though he was always in charge according to Col. 1.

- *Compare with Rev. 20 where we see Satan's final demise*
- *Today, therefore, Satan continues his dominion as the prince of this world (John 12:31), and therefore the reality of our heavenly foe continues unabated.*

#1: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Revealed

#2: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Opposed

III. The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Defended

Eph. 6:14-17a

14 Stand therefore, **having your loins girt about with truth**, and having on **the breastplate of [the] righteousness**;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of **the gospel of [the] peace**;

16 Above all, taking **the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**

17a And take **the helmet of salvation . . .**

- ***This is the "the whole armour of God" in its practical details outlined only. Why only an outline?***
- ***These are defensive in every case!***
 - ". . . having your loins girt about with truth" - truth in general should be our dwelling place, so we are ready for the battle to surely come - the Bible and specifically, the Pauline teaching for today
 - ". . . having on **the breastplate of [the] righteousness**" - the righteousness, the imputed righteousness of our savior in dying for our sins", to protect our heart and lungs in the battle
 - ". . . and your feet shod with the preparation of **the gospel of [the] peace**" - the good news concerning the peace, the peace with God and of God within which we must always be exhorted to fully rest whatever comes our way. This is to prevent our feet from stumbling since any other peace provides no firm place to stand and no path for our course in spiritual battle or life.
 - ". . . Above all, taking **the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked**" - our final defensive weapon is our shield - it is able to quench the penetrating and disruptive forays of the enemy of our souls

and spirits. This shield will intercept the enemy's attacks before they reach us.

- “. . . And take the helmet of [the] salvation” - last but not least, our heads need protection. Don't be dismayed in battle for our victory is assured through our savior's already accomplished victory.

#1: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Revealed

#2: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Opposed

#3: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Defended

[Your thoughts / comments?]

IV. The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery -Still Boldly Proclaimed?

Eph. 6:17b-20

17b and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19 And for me, **that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,**

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: **that therein I may speak boldly,** as I ought to speak.

- ***Now the offensive portion follows (and in many ways this is the key exhortation here as Paul uses himself as our example) -***
- ***“the sword of the Spirit” - the weapon that the Lord would want to use today, under grace, is the tactical sword of the spirit.***
- ***“the word of God”: The word “word” here means an “utterance”, the words that come forth from the mouth, not the doctrine or the “logos”.***
- ***“the mystery of the gospel” - the sacred secret of the good news concerning the grace of God.***
- ***“that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly . . . that therein I may speak boldly”***
- ***QUESTION: Is our apostle to be our example, leading the way, in this spiritual, this heavenly warfare?***

#1: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Revealed

#2: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Opposed

#3: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Defended

#4: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery -Still Boldly Proclaimed?

[Your thoughts / comments?]

Conclusions (and Exhortations):

- *Do we grasp what is the essence of our spiritual warfare today under the fullness of God's grace?*
- *What about the opposition to this teaching which we find on every side? How do we handle that?*
- *The truth concerning what God is doing today reveals what the enemy's work is -- this is so simple and yet so easily misunderstood.*
- *Knowing this tells us everything we need to know about spiritual warfare today, REALLY!*
- *Paul's exhortation to Timothy explains it all:*

1 Tim. 1:3-4

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying [the dispensation of God, the one] which is in faith: so do.

Be bold, brethren, for the sword of the spirit is the utterance of God! Amen.