

PRAISING

Message 4

Maintaining Christ's Victory in the Church through Praise

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Chron. 20:1-30; Psa. 8:2; 68:1-4, 11-12, 24-25; 149:5-9

I. In the New Testament, the work in God's economy to build up the church is a warfare—Matt. 16:18:

- A. Spiritual warfare is necessary because Satan's will is set against God's will—Gen. 3:15; Isa. 14:12-14; Matt. 6:10; 7:21:
 - 1. Spiritual warfare has its source in the conflict between the divine will and the satanic will.
 - 2. God wants His creature *man* to deal with His fallen creature *Satan*; for this, the human will must stand with the divine will and fight to subdue the satanic will—Gen. 1:26; Matt. 26:39; 12:30; 7:21; Rev. 12:11.
- B. The purpose of spiritual warfare is to bring in the kingdom of God—11:15:
 - 1. Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan—Matt. 12:26, 28.
 - 2. The kingdom of God is the exercise of the divine will and the overthrowing of the power of Satan by the power of God—6:10; 12:28.
- C. All spiritual work is a warfare—Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 10:3-5:
 - 1. All the spiritual work we are doing for God, whatever form it may take, as long as it touches the things of the spiritual realm, is in the nature of warfare—cf. Neh. 4:15-17.
 - 2. What hinders the gospel is not the outward environment but Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4); what usurps men and causes them not to love the Lord is neither human ties, nor the world, nor the flesh, but the Satanic power of darkness (cf. Acts 5:3); the reason for all the confusion, striving, indifference, and corruption in the church is naught else but Satan (Matt. 16:18b; cf. Prov. 6:19).
 - 3. Therefore, we do not deal with the things that appear on the surface, but, through the position and authority of ascension, we deal with the power of darkness that schemes behind these things and reigns on earth—Eph. 6:12; S. S. 4:8.
 - 4. Among the children of God there are not enough who are fighting the warfare, and the element of spiritual warfare is too little; hence, Satan still rules in the air and on the earth.

II. Prayer is warfare, but praise is victory—2 Chron. 20:22-23; Psa. 8:2; 68:1-4; 149:6-9:

- A. The ultimate goal of Satan is to stop all praises to God:
 - 1. Whenever we praise, Satan flees; therefore, Satan hates our praising the most; he will use all his strength to stop our praising.
 - 2. Satan's greatest attacks are not aimed at prayers; his greatest attacks are aimed at praise.
- B. "And when they began to shout in song and to praise, Jehovah set ambushes for the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who were coming out against Judah; and they were struck. And the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to absolutely destroy and demolish them; and when they had made an end to the inhabitants of Seir, every man helped to destroy his neighbor"—2 Chron. 20:22-23:
 - 1. In 2 Chronicles 20 the Moabites, Ammonites, and the people of Mount Seir came to invade Judah.

2. Jehoshaphat appointed singers to sing praises to Jehovah; he also asked these ones to praise the beauty of His holiness and to walk out before the army and to say, "Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures forever."
 3. When everyone was singing praises to Jehovah, He rose to smite the Ammonites, Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir.
 4. In this chapter we find a very unique principle: spiritual victory does not depend on warfare but on praise:
 - a. We need to learn to overcome Satan by our praise; once the sacrifice of praise ascends to God, the enemy, Satan, is defeated by the praise; when you praise, you will find the way of victory opening before your eyes.
 - b. Prayer is not the fastest way to move the Lord's hand; praise is the fastest way; we can overcome many things only by praising.
- C. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have established strength because of Your adversaries, to stop the enemy and the avenger"—Psa. 8:2:
1. This verse shows us three negative categories of persons: the adversaries, the enemy, and the avenger:
 - a. Adversaries are those who are within, enemies are those who are without, and the avengers are those who run back and forth—cf. Job 1:7.
 - b. Satan can be signified by these three categories: first, Satan was within God's kingdom; then Satan became an enemy without, outside the kingdom of God; he is also the avenger, running back and forth.
 2. The Lord has established strength or perfected praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings for the purpose of stopping His adversaries, the enemy, and the avenger.
- D. "Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered; and let those who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, You will drive them away; as wax melts before fire, the wicked perish before God. But the righteous will rejoice; they will exult before God and be glad with rejoicing. Sing to God; sing psalms to His name; triumph in Him who rides through the deserts"—Psa. 68:1-4a:
1. The overcomers realize that spiritual warfare is based on the victory of Christ—Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15; 1 John 3:8:
 - a. The starting point of spiritual warfare is standing upon the victory of Christ; it is seeing that Christ has already overcome—S. S. 4:8; Rev. 3:21; 5:5-6.
 - b. The work of the church on earth is to maintain Christ's victory; the Lord has already won the battle, and the church is here to maintain His victory—Eph. 6:11, 13.
 2. First of all, in Psalm 68, we have the victory in battle over the enemies: "Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered"—v. 1:
 - a. This is not just the battle but the victory in battle; the battle is over, and now we have the victory.
 - b. This is a triumphant psalm, a psalm with triumph and victory.
 - c. We must learn to praise according to Psalm 68; our praise must match the element and standard of this Psalm—vv. 3-4, 25.
- E. "Let the high praises of God be in their throats, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment among the peoples; to bind their kings with fetters and their nobles with chains of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written. This honor is for all His faithful ones. Hallelujah!"—Psa. 149:6-9.