

“The Sword of the Spirit”

Ephesians 6:17

Introduction:

1. Since 9/11 we have been engaged in a global war on terror. Our world changed on that day, and we should always remember what happened, those who lost their lives, and the grief of their families. As we have seen too many times during the last two years, terrorists have no mercy. They are heartless and ruthless murderers. But behind them and all the other evil in this world is a more sinister, cruel and desperately wicked enemy—Satan. We are at war with the powers of darkness, but God has provided us with spiritual armor for our protection.

2. The sixth piece of armor is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Let’s think briefly about the nature of the ancient soldier’s sword. In ancient warfare, a soldier might carry two different kinds of swords. One was called the ρομφαία. It was the heavy, great sword. But the other was called the μάχαιρα, which was the short sword. The soldier in man-to-man combat used this short sword, and it is the one spoken of in this verse. So the apostle is reminding us of the close encounter we will have with our spiritual enemies.

3. The sword is the only piece of the armor mentioned that has both an offensive and defensive purpose. In fact, among these six, the sword is the only one that can be used offensively. Let us consider the value of the sword of the Spirit to the followers of Christ.

Exposition:

I. The nature of the sword—it is “the word of God”

A. At the very foundation of the Christian faith is the word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and the New Testament Scriptures.

1. God chose to reveal himself to humanity by word communication, and he chose to record his words in written form (2 Tm 3:16). Since it is from God who cannot lie, it is accurate, true, and without error.

Comment: Some people have claimed that there are errors in the Bible, but a study of these supposed errors shows that they are matters of a difference of worldview (“miracles are impossible”), of a failure to understand the text, of a failure to understand the way the Bible presents events (God doesn’t tell us everything that happened and we let our imaginations run

astray), of various kinds of ignorance, or a failure of translation or other human factors. Serious Christians have sufficiently answered these questions countless times.

2. We know that the Bible is God's trustworthy word...

a. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit – Lk 24:32; 1 Th 1:5

b. Because of the Scriptures claim to be God's word and their subject matter agrees with the claim

c. Because human experience demonstrates the truth of the Bible

Apply: Ask the suppressor of truth the following:

- Do you fear God? Rm 3:18
- Do you feel the gospel is foolish? 1 Cor 1:18
- Do you want to do things your way? Is 53:6
- Do you think Christ's Second Coming and the final judgment is a joke? 2 Pt 3:3-4
- Would you rather go out partying or to church? 2 Tm 3:4
- Do you think Christians are weird for the way we live? 1 Pt 4:3-4

“Thank you for proving to me that the Bible is true!”

d. Because all the scientific and historic facts support my belief

e. Because my reason is satisfied

B. The Bible is a present communication to humanity (cf. 1 Pt 2:6; Mt 21:13; 22:43).

It directs our viewpoints and conduct continually.

Example: Christ's use of the Scriptures

II. The relationship between the Spirit and the word—reasons why the word of God is called the “sword of the Spirit”

A. The Holy Spirit is the author of the word.

1. He spoke through the human writers. 2 Sm 23:2; Mk 12:36

2. He guided the human writers to accomplish his intended goal. 2 Pt 1:20-21

Point: When we engage in spiritual battle, we are to take with us the word of the Almighty Holy Spirit of God. As we strike with it, he is very able to accomplish **his** purpose. Is 55:11

B. The Holy Spirit enables people to understand the word. 1 Cor 2:10b-14

1. Every human heart by nature is unable to understand the truth of the Scriptures. Yes, people can comprehend what we say, but it does not convince them.

Illustration: "I just don't get it; how can the death of Jesus save anyone?"

2. But the Spirit is given so that we do understand (1 Cor 2:12). Then we accept it and it effectively works in us.

Point: When we take the sword of the Spirit, we must rely on Christ' power to work through the Spirit to achieve results. Don't just post a Bible verse; pray for Spiritual application.

C. The Holy Spirit uses the word to produce spiritual results. Therefore, we must avoid overemphasizing two sides.

1. Don't rely on the Spirit without the word of God.
2. Don't rely on the word of God without the Spirit.

III. The uses of the word

A. The word of God is essential in sanctification or Christian growth.

1. The classic example of this is Christ's use of the Scripture in resisting the temptations of the evil one (Mt 4). Every Christian needs to have a large supply of ammunition from God's word against every temptation to violate God's laws, whether temptations to commit what God forbids or temptations to fail to do what God commands.

Apply: A good section to put to heart is Eph 4:17-6:9, or in a more concise form Col 3:5-4:6.

2. But the Lord intends that the word have a wider use in our lives (2 Tm 3:16-17; Heb 4:12). The Spirit says that the word can work comprehensive changes in us, down to our thoughts and attitudes. We must see change at this inner level to realize outward change. You must be convinced in your heart before you will truly change.

Apply: This is why we must read and study God's word. In this whole study, we have been urged to put on the full armor of God. That is the goal, but if we will just begin to put on one part, it might cause tremendous changes in our lives and in this church!

B. The word of God is essential in evangelism.

1. The word of God is the spiritual seed used by the Holy Spirit in producing regeneration or the new birth from above.

2. As the Spirit works in us with the word, a change of mind and faith are given, and we turn from our rebellion against God to rely on Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Apply: Has this happened to you?