

Calvary Assembly



A Church of the
Foursquare Gospel
in Australia



The Sword of the Spirit

The Word of God

From the Pastor's heart



Spiritual warfare

The rules of Engagement

It is evident that God sets the rules of engagement in spiritual warfare. Everything begins with Him and ends with Him. So it is only natural that He sets the rules of engagement. Once this is understood warfare becomes part and parcel of life till, either we die and go to be with the Lord or He comes and ends the world.

Many Christians have discovered that warfare is not as easy as rebuking the devil. The subtleties at play and the raw out working of warfare have severe implications and applications on a daily basis. All of humanity is in a war for their survival. Warfare is real on two levels; the natural and spiritual. The earth is hurtling towards disaster because of the works of the devil on earth. Man is out of control on planet earth and he knows it. Yet man continues on his merry little way fulfilling the whims and fancies of the devil.

It is into this scene on earth that God intervenes with His brand of warfare that puts His plan into play on earth. To understand the rules of engagement we have to look no further than the deliverance of Israel as a nation from Egypt. God sets the scene using the first rule of engagement which is, God initiated warfare:

1. First of all God sends His general Moses to the battlefield in Egypt
2. God then hardens Pharaoh's heart to make things more interesting (stressful) for all concerned
3. God extends his forgiveness to Pharaoh through a willingness to listen to his repentance
4. Pharaoh mistakes God's intentions and becomes more arrogant resulting in being severely punished through the plagues till death finally overtakes Egypt's first born
5. God delivers His people through Moses who did several miracles on the instruction of God
6. God takes them out by a high hand and brings them to a dead end at the Red Sea for a final dramatic encounter with Pharaoh
7. There God shows His might through an ordinary man and parts the Red Sea in the sight of everyone present
8. He finally destroys Pharaoh and his armies in the Red Sea after safely delivering His people

What is important to understand about this whole episode in mankind's history is, God initiated this battle based on a word He had given Abraham hundreds of years prior to the fulfilling of that word. **Gen 15:12** *And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.* **Gen 15:13** *And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;* **Gen 15:14** *And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.* **God never forgets His word.** When God initiates warfare, it is something one can take comfort in because the outcome is sure.

The second set of rules in warfare are applied when we have to face the attacks of the enemy that are initiated by the devil. The rules that apply here are different and the outcome can be different. When one is engaged in warfare that comes in this manner, the dependence is on the faculties of God given to the believer. The many weapons of our warfare can and will defeat the enemy if we stand by faith and believe in God's protection and backing. The intensity of this fight can be difficult because we are involved through weakness in our flesh which causes us to often slip back into the flesh in the middle of the battle. This is exemplified in the battles that we face against temptations and weakness of the mind. One day we are strong walking in the Spirit and another day we find ourselves hopelessly weak in the flesh and wide open to temptation. **This is why Christians often lose the war after winning the battle.** The war

is the whole conflict for the soul that is built into many smaller battles through life. When we relax and think it is over that is when the next battle starts. The idea is to stay strong through the battles till the war is won and the enemy is totally defeated in our thinking first and then spiritually. In some cases, this could even take years depending on the battle.

For example; a Church body that seeks to grow and do well finds itself in battles not realising that the war is for the Church's existence as a body. So, emphasis is laid on the battles rather than the war. To win the war, the Church must get God to burn up root and branch. Burning branch problems in our lives alone is equivalent to only fighting battles. However, when the root problem is dealt with, the war is won. **Mal 4:1** *For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.* It is evident through these verses that once the root and branch is dealt with (that is why David cut off Goliath's head which ended the battle and the war), then there is nothing left to come back and bite us again. Chopping the head of your enemy is imperative to finishing the battle and the war. It is an act of showing the enemy that he is totally and utterly defeated. It is interesting to note that the enemy is always keen to strike the head of any form of authority in God. Entering into God's rest is winning the war in our minds (head) where it often rages first. Then the battles are not so hard to win. That rest is in who you are, where you are, and where you are going. Trust God to direct you through the wilderness, scorpions and snakes and bring you into the Promised Land.

The evidence that the war is won is when there is healing made evident in every sense. The body, soul and spirit must be healed by virtue of understanding of God's ways. This will bring your enemies under your feet. In other words they are subject to you even though they remain in the vicinity. You now know your enemies and know how to defeat them. When the old life is over through accepting Jesus, your enemies are placed under your feet and you must learn to keep them there. This is evident in the life of Jesus when He was resurrected and took His place on the throne subjecting His enemies under His feet till the appropriate time. This is a Biblical concept that must be understood. Many do not realise that though they have won the battle and often time the war, their enemies are still around. Though battles may continue on after that and wars will have to be won, you can do so from a position of authority and not weakness. Winning by the knowledge of God's plan for your life and the Church is the key to not giving into the enemy's deceptions. Many a Christian has lost his battle because he has not understood that winning this type of battle and war is up to him and not God. Keeping God's commandments, walking in the Spirit and having faith are all crucial to winning. Sin will weaken the Christian and expose him to the attacks of the enemy without the protection of God. When a Christian walks in righteousness the enemy has no power over the Christian. Though the battle may rage and things get worse, the Christian understands that winning is through appropriating by faith the work of Jesus on the cross. As soon as the Christian appropriates this knowledge by faith he becomes more than a conqueror. God expects that you will fight because He has given you the faculties to fight. Prayer is the key.

The third rule of engagement is applicable when the Christian wages war on the devil. He does this to take back territory and establish the Kingdom of God on earth. The idea of preaching the gospel is really entering into warfare. The moment you put your hand to the plough you are engaged in warfare. The rules here are even trickier because you have to walk in a manner that is not only walking in righteousness and holiness but listening to the Holy Spirit who trains your fingers for battle. Many Christians have gone out on a whim and a fancy or unconfirmed prophecy and have found themselves in deep trouble. Though we are called to be witnesses for Christ, Jesus told His disciples that He was giving them power to be His disciples. He did this when He sent the Holy Ghost and power. We too must receive the Holy Ghost and power. This is essential to warfare and the spreading of the gospel.

It is this kind of warfare coupled with the one where the devil attacks that keep us busy in warfare. That is why many Christians will not put their hand to the plough because they do not want to face their enemy. They would rather go along with routine, tradition and non-involvement than to be engaged in the extension of the Kingdom of God. Churches today have become hospitals and refuge centres for many Christians who are born again who in spite of having known Christ for ages have not grown to become a force that can engage the enemy. Rather, they have become victims of their own fears. Where are you today? Are you ready for warfare hearing the words "onward Christian soldiers marching as to war" or are you the type that says it is not for you and everyone to himself?

Lots of love
Pastor Noble
14/05/2017