

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part LIX: 2 Timothy - The Christian Worker's Spiritual War Manual"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Though the year is still young, we already face spiritual challenges in our Nepaug Church ministry:

(1) On January 5, some parties in the hall of the rear Fellowship Hall stairwell hit the wall so hard that tapes fell off of the shelves in the adjoining Library. The matter came up at a Board Meeting later that night, and one board member said, "This (behavior) is intolerable; it has got to stop!"

(2) The same board meeting also addressed the 1997 budget, and Duane Doot asked for my comments before I left the room for the board to discuss my salary. His request arose from a series of trying events: (a) though our salary has fallen behind our living needs for several years, the shortfall has been made up by personal gifts from individuals, so I have always testified that the Lord has met our needs. (b) However, due to sensitive, **complex** matters, I dreaded a **spiteful** reaction from **outside** the Church directed toward me or the body were I to have received a bonus from last year's church budget surplus: thus, **before** the vote on the issue, I **publicly** urged the Adult Sunday School Class **not** to vote for the bonus while **also** privately telling Duane that our salary was really **inadequate**. That way, I tried to avoid a crisis and still keep from looking bitter by announcing our salary needs were the vote to have denied the bonus. (c) So, at Duane's request, I explained to the board of our current salary shortage while affirming that God **always** meets our needs.

When Duane called me back and shared that the men had decided to set our salary \$4,800 higher, though I appreciated the Board's sensitivity, I also felt apprehensive about the Annual Meeting! Though last year's crisis is past, I wondered if the congregation would understand this raise in view of my urgings last year to the Adult Class?

(3) As for our Annual Meetings themselves, several have expressed concern over the conduct of members in the meetings. Some have even stayed home due to this issue, and that to the point where we might not be able to sustain a bylaw-required quorum this year to pass important theological clarifications to our statement of faith!

Why do such difficulties consistently seem to face those who serve the Lord?! What is the solution?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section of the sermon . . .)

Need: "Either I or an associate is having a rough, painful time in a certain Christian service effort! It's as though one is being hit from every conceivable angle of vulnerability! WHY is this happening when the party is only humbly trying to serve God?! What NOW?!"

- I. **When God made the Church as His vehicle of opposing apostasy, it made Church WORKERS Satan's PRIME TARGETS of attack!**
 - A. Though God created the world without sin, Satan seduced Eve to sin and man fell into disobedience and death, Gen. 1-3.
 - B. God renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod began an apostasy that promoted Satan's reign over man on earth, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
 - D. God thus used Abraham to start a nation to check his sin, Gn. 12:1-3.
 - E. Yet, Old Testament history records not only that nation, Israel's failure to curb Nimrod's error, but her tendency to be corrupted by it in spite of God's discipline to the contrary, Gen. 12:4-Malachi.
 - F. God sent Jesus, Israel's long-awaited Messiah, but Israel rejected Him. God then graciously postponed the Kingdom's installation and carried on its recruitment program through the Church, the Gospels and Acts.
 - G. However, handing the **Church** God's baton in the world historical relay to counter Nimrodian apostasy made **Church workers** prime **targets** of Satan's forces in the **ongoing spiritual WORLD conflict!**
 - H. That created the need for instruction for **Church** workers in the **Church's dispensation** on doing spiritual battle **TODAY!**
- II. **Thus, God used spiritual veteran, Paul to pen a Christian Worker's Spiritual War Manual to equip believers in service for this conflict:**
 - A. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy, he was a seasoned apostle jailed in a cold dungeon knowing he would soon be martyred, **B.K.C., N.T.**, p. 749.
 - B. His letter's recipient was a tearful pastor named Timothy who faced overwhelming spiritual opposition in his ministry, 2 Tim. 1:1-4.
 - C. Thus, 2 Timothy is **The Christian Worker's Spiritual War Manual:**
 1. **The Christian Worker's Combat Equipment:**
 - a. Use our Spiritual Gift for success under fire, 1:6-7. (The gun)
 - b. Rely on God's eternal purposes re: our ministry success for confidence against paralyzing ministry unbelief, 1:8-10. (armor)
 - c. Rely on the indwelling Spirit to offset persecution pressures and retain our doctrinal purity, 2 Tim. 1:11-14. (ammunition)
 2. **The Christian Worker's Combat Mission** - he must commit God's truth to faithful men so they can disciple others, 2 Tim. 2:2.
 3. **The Christian Workers General Combat Maneuvers**, 2:3-16:

- a. View Christian ministry as a **spiritual WAR** to be vigilant, 2:3b.
 - b. Keep your activities to a **narrow** focus to maximize efficiency, 4
 - c. Keep your methods **Biblical** to succeed, 2 Tim. 2:5.
 - d. Check to see if you are always obeying God by His telltale signal of financial remuneration, 2 Tim. 2:6-7: if you are on the beam, this remuneration is regular; if you err, He signals problems by withdrawing support to cause self-examination.
 - e. Be optimistic -- your risen Lord wants you to win, 2:8-10!
 - f. Expect to pay a price to succeed as par in service: (a) to live victoriously, expect to die to self, 11; (b) to influence others, expect to suffer, 12a; (c) to succeed, promote Christ, 2:12b-13.
 - g. Exegete Scripture correctly to succeed in service, 2:14-16.
4. **The Christian Worker's Hand-To-Hand Combat Maneuvers:**
- a. If personally opposed by unjust competition, don't retaliate, but let God handle it **for us**, 2:17-19; Num. 16:5,26 with contexts.
 - b. If pressured by the ungodly, seek supportive comrades of like pure heart to edify through godly fellowship, 2 Tim. 2:20-23.
 - c. If **directly** assailed, gently state the truth and trust **God** to press the issue as you are confronted by one captive by Satan, 2:24-26
 - d. If assailants are abusive, avoid direct contact with them, 3:1-11.
 - e. Treat persecution as **par** to avoid being demoralized, 3:1-13.
 - f. Keep your bearings by reading and teaching Scripture, 3:14-4:5.
 - g. For motivation, focus on eternal rewards, 4: 6-8; Mtt. 5:10-12.
5. **The Christian Worker's Combat Resupply Maneuvers, 4:9-22:**
- a. Paul counted the "spiritual casualties" and closed ranks with those still remaining faithful to Christ, 2 Tim. 4:9-12, 14-15.
 - b. He testified of God's help to boost Timothy's morale, 4:16-18.
 - c. He closed with Timothy's new redeployment orders, 4:19-22,13.

III. **2 Timothy adds to the "thread of redemption" on showing how CHURCH workers can successfully disciple men against the spiritual attacks in this current Church era of HISTORY'S WAR.**

Application: *To succeed in Christian service today, (1) believe on Christ as Savior from sin to belong to His spiritual "army" and be equipped for real success in the angelic conflict, Jn. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:6-14. (2) Then, realize we serve God in a WAR dating back to EDEN, and use 2 Timothy as a manual for victory in service today!*

Lesson: *2 Timothy is God's directions for sure discipling success under any spiritual opposition in the Church era! Thus, READ it and USE it!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon solution . . .)

Years ago, I was privileged to hear a moving testimony by an evangelist I believe was named Paul Levine.

He shared that one week he had a series of evangelistic services with a pianist who traveled with him at a Christian campground.

This particular group of kids was unusually rowdy. The problem mounted until at one meeting, while the evangelist stood up to speak, the kids were so uncontrollable that he could not be heard for their noise. The camp counselors couldn't quiet them down, and so the pianist got up to the piano to try to establish order by playing a Christian song.

But as the pianist got to the keyboard, he felt a great weight come over him so he couldn't even bring his hands to play. He instantly recognized he was under spiritual attack, and went to prayer right there at the keyboard. As he prayed, the evangelist suddenly began preaching the truth, and the kids were stunned into complete silence. As a result, when the sermon ended, huge crowds of teens accepted Christ under deep conviction of sin and many Christians rededicated their lives to live for Christ.

The battle had been SPIRITUAL--not fleshly--and the evangelist and his traveling pianist wisely noticed the NATURE of their battle as being just that to gain God's victory.

LET US DO THE SAME AT NEPAUG. WHETHER WE DEAL WITH (1) CONTROLLING THE CONDUCT OF PEOPLE IN FELLOWSHIP HALL, (2) HANDLING SALARY ISSUES AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, (3) SOLVING THE CONDUCT PROBLEMS OF PEOPLE AT OUR ANNUAL MEETINGS, (4) GETTING ENOUGH MEMBERS AT THE MEETING TO PASS IMPORTANT DOCTRINAL ISSUES INTO OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH OR (5) DEALING WITH DIVISIONS BETWEEN MISSIONARIES WE SUPPORT--THESE MATTERS ARE SPIRITUAL WARFARE MATTERS. Let us be in prayer and look to God's Word for every step we take!