

Christian Warfare

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | October 6, 2022



Do you remember the song *Onward Christian Soldiers*? I remember singing it mightily as a child:

*Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war
With the cross of Jesus going on before
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe
Forward into battle see His banners go*

Do you recognize that we are in a war?

When you think of this war, what comes to mind?

Jesus said,

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it (Matthew 11:12 NIV84).

But what does this mean? How do forceful people lay hold of God's kingdom? Can God's kingdom be obtained by force, might, or power? Didn't God previously say that it is "not by might nor by power, but

by my Spirit” that His kingdom advances? (Zechariah 4:6 NIV84). So how can forceful people lay hold of God’s kingdom if it doesn’t advance with might and power?

The Good News translation helps clear up the confusion:

From the time John preached his message until this very day the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violent attacks, and violent men try to seize it (Matthew 11:12).

God’s kingdom is the kingdom of love, truth, and liberty. It is built upon design law, the protocols upon which the Creator built reality to operate. It cannot be advanced through might, power, force, coercion, external control, imposed laws, or inflicted punishments.

That’s why God cannot win people to love and trust by threatening to torture and kill those who don’t love and trust Him. Such actions result in just the opposite outcome—more rebellion, less trust, and the destruction of love.

It is Satan’s kingdom that operates upon imposed law and advances through external control, inflicted punishments, and violence.

So Jesus is telling us that since John the Baptist came preaching about the true kingdom of God—the kingdom that operates within the hearts and minds of men (Luke 17:21)—violent men, humans who embrace Satan’s kingdom of imposed laws and coercive force, have been trying to take control of it. Meaning, violent men who use imposed law, imposed punishments, and external control have been trying to take control of the Christian message and, ultimately, control of human hearts and minds.

And sadly, they have succeeded far too often.

We are in a war, fighting upon the same battlefield against the same enemy, and utilizing the same weapons that Jesus did. Jesus won every encounter, but after His ascension, the violent people slowly took over the “church” and rebuilt it not upon God’s design laws of truth, love, and freedom, but upon Roman law, Roman power, and violent methods of coercive control.

The idea that God’s law functions like human law, imposed rules requiring God to use power to punish rule-breakers, has become assumed truth to almost all Christians. Thus, violent people have taken control of the theology of Christianity and teach a violent, punishing god that wars against Jesus and what Jesus lived, taught, and revealed.

The Gates of Hell

But Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against His true church, which is built upon Him (Matthew 16:18). What a strange and interesting expression—the gates will not prevail? Think about that imagery. In warfare, what role do gates play? Do people carry gates into battle? No, gates are used to close out opposing forces and to seal in a captive people.

Jesus is saying that Satan, with his lies about God, has taken the hearts and minds of people captive in fear and selfishness. The enemy has closed the minds and hearts of many through fear and falsehood,

but his gates of lies, of fear, of selfishness cannot prevail against the divine weapons given to us by God.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have **divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV84).

Our divine weapons have the power to demolish the gates of hell, to open hearts and minds to healing and salvation, to set the captives free!

- The divine weapon of truth demolishes lies—"you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32 NIV84).
- The divine weapon of love demolishes fear—"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18 NRSV).

We war against lies with truth and against fear and selfishness with love—the infinite love of God found only in Jesus. We do as Jesus instructed:

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:44, 45, 48 NIV84).

We can never win the war for God's kingdom by embracing and practicing the methods of this world. We cannot win people to love by seeking to control, dominate, punish, and destroy those who disagree with us. So we move forward with the truth, in love, leaving others free.

But we also cannot win the war by compromising with the enemy, by agreeing with their falsehoods, in order to get their approval. The truth cannot be exchanged for a lie for the sake of peace. No, we are at war. We must war against all lies, all falsehoods, and all violations of the kingdom of God.

In a war, the force that takes the initiative dictates the place and the flow of the battle and often wins the conflict; the force defending scrambles to react to the force directing the terms of the engagement.

As Christians, we are to be advancing the kingdom of God by taking the initiative, moving forward the truth about Jesus, and standing firm for reality as God created things to be. But all too often, reacting to the false allegations of God's enemy, too many good-hearted people find themselves placating the enemy rather than advancing the truth God has given them.

Have we fallen into a trap of reacting to the methods, standards, practices, rules, and logic of the world, trying to meet the worldly on the platform of godless standards, or are we advancing the kingdom of God on God's terms, with His methods, holding to His principles and refusing to step down into the perversion of the world?

When COVID swept the world and the fear-messaging, mind manipulation, and other coercive tactics were employed, did Christian organizations stand for the principles of truth, love, and liberty of

conscience—or did far too many embrace the methods of the world and justify coercion of conscience and collusion with the false governmental narratives? (If you would like to know what the false narratives were and how minds were manipulated, see my presentation [COVID and the Manipulation of Your Mind.](#))

When greed-driven corporations and power-hungry politicians divide society based on race, sex, gender, or any other identity issue, does the church fall into their trap and seek to prove how inclusive it is by holding sensitivity training and working to be inclusive of each and every identity group—or does the church stand for the principles of God's kingdom and stand firm on the truth that there are only two groups of people: the righteous and the wicked, the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares, the saved and the lost. Do Christians recognize that in God's kingdom, race, sex, nationality, tribe, language, marital status, or vax status doesn't matter? What matters is character. In God's kingdom, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28 NIV84). In God's kingdom, there are only those who are like Jesus in character—and we are to advance the kingdom of God by keeping Christ, His character, methods, principles, and design laws central.

Martin Luther King Jr. understood this and dreamed of a country in which his little girls would be judged by the quality of their character and not by the color of their skin. Has the church continued to advance this high standard of godliness—or has it fallen into the devil's trap and worked to prove to the world how inclusive it is?

Yes, we are at war, but it is not a war of might or power; it is a war of methods: truth, love, freedom at war against lies, fear and selfishness, and control. I invite you to embrace the kingdom of God and advance it by using only His methods—truth, love, and freedom.