

Sunday, June 9, 2013—The Battlefield of the Mind—Phase Three Discourage or Discredit the Messenger

Introduction/Review

- We are now in our fifth study in our new series *The Battlefield of the Mind*. We have been using II Corinthians 10:3-5 as our base text for this study.
- Thus far we have observed the following points:
 - II Cor. 10:2-3—there is a difference between walking “according to the flesh” and walking “in the flesh.” The unsaved live both *in the flesh* and *according to the flesh*. In contrast believers who have trusted in the finished work of Christ live *only in the flesh*, but *not according to the flesh*.
 - II Cor. 10:3—believers are engaged in a war. Even though we walk in the flesh our warfare is not with flesh and blood, we do not war after the flesh.
 - II Cor. 10:4—the weapons that believers are to use in this warfare are not carnal or fleshly. We cannot fight against a spiritual enemy using fleshly weapons.
 - Ephesians 6:11-13—believers are instructed to put on the whole armor of God (weapons) so that we might be able to stand (remain fixed and unmovable) against the wiles (cleverly designed tricks designed to deceive) of the devil.
- In seeking to understand “the wiles of the devil” and why we need to put on the whole armor of God, in our last two messages we have been studying Satan’s policy of evil against the body of Christ. Strategically, Satan’s battleplan calls for three major lines of attack designed to dislodge the believer from his/her fixed position and cause them not to withstand and hold the line.
 - Phase One (first line of attack): Attack the Message. Battle Cry--Deceive
 - Phase Two (second line of attack): Attack the Messenger. Battle Cry--Intimidate
 - Phase Three (third line of attack): Discredit or Discourage the Messenger.

Phase Three: Discourage or Discredit the Messenger

- II Timothy 1:6-8—Phase Two was never largely successful with Paul but it was, however, with Timothy for a time. Timothy had developed within him a “spirit of fear.” He was occupied in his mind with the unpleasant consequences of standing for and proclaiming the increasingly unpopular message of the mystery of Christ. In view of the unpopularity of the message committed to Paul, and the on-going departure from him that was taking place, Timothy had become “ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” and of Paul “his prisoner.” He had, as a result withdrawn from his former boldness in his ministry.

- With Paul, Phase Two of the policy of evil was not successful. However, this did not hinder Satan’s attempt to silence Paul. When phase one and two are not successful Phase Three attacks commence. The goal is the same, silence the faithful messenger but it is sought a different way.
- If a believer cannot be intimidated into silence (Phase Two), then firm attempt will be made to discredit him in the minds of others so that he will not be seriously listened to. Along with this the policy of evil seeks to produce discouragement within the Christian.
- The Battle-Cry of Phase Three is Hopeless and Despair that lead to voluntary withdrawal from the fight because of discouragement and disappointment.
 - Awol— *Military* absent without leave; absent from one's post or duty without official permission but without intending to desert.
 - Desert— 1) To forsake; to leave utterly; to abandon; to quit with a view not to return to; as, to desert a friend; to desert our country; to desert a cause. 2) To leave, without permission, a military band, or a ship, in which one is enlisted; to forsake the service in which one is engaged, in violation of duty; as, to desert the army; to desert ones colors; to desert a ship.
 - Desertion— The act of forsaking or abandoning, as a party, a friend, a country, an army or military band, or a ship; the act of quitting, with an intention not to return.
- The “wiles” employed in this phase are often similar to those used to produce intimidation in Phase Two: reproach, gossip, slander, and name calling. This time they are especially brought home to others as they are made to appear in the eyes of others as thing that ought to discredit the faithful messenger. This is often felt by the messenger experiencing “cold shoulder” treatment and if he/she cannot be avoided they are not taken seriously or given an honest hearing. Not only does this type of treatment limit ones audience it is also very effective at producing great discouragement.
- Since he could not be doctrinally corrupted or intimidated into silence Paul faced this line of attack. Paul often needed to defend himself against unjust, inflammatory, and outright false charges and accusations that were laid against him. His detractors were many, and as such the often experienced the discrediting tactics they used to dissuade other from listening to him. Paul was the victim of all sorts of discrediting propaganda, smear campaigns, rumors, false accusations, lies, and innuendoes.
- Romans 3:8—Paul was often slanderously reported. The Greek word translated “slanderously” here means: 1) to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate, blaspheme 2) to be evil spoken of, reviled, railed at

- I Corinthians 4:9-17—the word “defamed” in verse 16 is the same Greek word translated “slanderosly” in Romans 3:8.
- I Corinthians 9:3—Paul constantly needed to defend himself against this detractors.
- II Corinthians 7:2-3—what most some of the Corinthians been accusing Paul of?
- Galatians 1:11-20, 4:11-18
- II Timothy 1:8, 15-18—can you imagine the things that religious people were saying about Paul while he was imprisoned? Paul’s chains were no doubt proclaimed as something that ought to discredit him of which Christians ought to be ashamed.
- II Timothy 2:8-9—Paul was not “evildoer” he was in prison as the result of proclaiming the unique gospel that God committed unto him concerning Jesus Christ.
- II Corinthians 1:8-9—even Paul became discouraged and despaired of life. But Paul did not give up he found his strength in God and his word and kept pressing forward. That is what we need to do here at Grace Life Bible Church. We need to hold the line and not be moved away from our stand for fellowship of the mystery.

Conclusion

- Galatians 6:9—we need to not grow weary of doing the right things.
- II Corinthians 2:11—let us not be ignorant of Satan and his devices. We understand Satan’s three part battle strategy against us so that we can hold the line and continue to stand for the truth. Next we will begin to study our weapons systems by looking at the armor of God.