

It Is Our Duty To Oppose Evil!

James 4:8 [NIV] *“Come near to God and He will come near to you...”*

The nearer we draw to the heart of God the less taste we have for controversy.

John 14:27 [NIV] *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

The peace we know in God’s fellowship is so sweet that it is but natural that we want to keep it unbroken by events around us and desire to enjoy it as fully and as long as possible.

The spirit-filled Christian is never by nature a good fighter.

Ephesians 6:13-17 [NIV] *“Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

When we consider the armour we are to wear we see that it is mostly defensive in nature.

The true Christian is always more at home blessing other people than opposing them.

We as true Christians find it difficult with the love of God in us to look on others as adversaries. We as true Christians shrink back from anger and seek not to spew out bitter words.

Anger, opposition, bitter words are to us as Christians the symbols of a society we have long forsaken for the peace of the Kingdom of God where love and goodwill will prevail.

This is an attitude towards life that is in the favour of a Christian for it marks us out as a person in whom there is no hate and who earnestly desires to live at peace with all people.

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

Such a life devoid of bitterness and hate and full of love for others is a powerful witness for our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Inspite of this sincere longing for peace, there are times when a Christian dare not allow themselves to enjoy that peace.

There are times when it is a sin of omission to be at peace.

There will be times in our lives when there is one Christian course to take, to stand up and be counted by vigorously opposing what is evil and wrong in God’s sight.

To “wink at” any sin for the sake of a peaceful life is **not** proof of superior spirituality.

To not bravely oppose sin is a sign of Christian timidity fearing the consequences of such an action.

We are showing we are **not** true soldiers of Christ.

Ephesians 6:10-12 [NIV] *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*

Note “against” the Greek “*prōs*” [pros] indicates a motion toward in the form of an attack.

James 4:7 [NIV] *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

Note “resist” the Greek word “*anthistēmi*” [anth-is-tay-mee] to stand in opposition to – to stand against. A positive rather than negative attitude.

Also note what is common in both of these scriptures. God’s total involvement, this is done in “His Power” and when we are acceptable to Him because of our humble dependence on Him.

We dare not face Satan and his influenced evil society on our own.

Romans 8:14 [NIV] *“...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

Remember we are “led by Holy Spirit”. We follow Him in this battle against evil.

Matthew 11:29-30 [NIV] *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

How are we joined to Jesus by working with the same “yoke”?

John 14:16 [NIV] *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever...”*

The Greek word translated “counsellor” is “*paraklētos*” [par-ak-lay-tos] meaning – One who is called to our side – it is the combination of encouragement with alleviation of grief.

The cost of our standing for what is right when the majority are in the wrong is going to be great.

We are going to need the power and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

1 John 4:4 [NIV] *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them [those with the spirit of antichrist], because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”*

We have developed in recent times a peace-loving, soft-spoken, tame and harmless brand of Christian of whom the world has no fear and for whom it has little respect.

We are careful never to speak in public against the destructive sins of modern civilisation for fear someone will brand us a bigoted and narrow [and they will do this].

Little by little we have as Christians and the Church as a whole, been forced off centre stage into the wings behind the curtain of public opinion where we will remain harmless and ineffective.

The Church seems to be seeking to win the crowds by amusing and entertaining them and any converts have the full implications of what being a Christian means hidden from them.

The Church seems to carry out its projects after the “*ballyhoo*” methods of big business.

1 Kings 18:15-39 [NIV] *“Elijah said, “As the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today.” So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?” “I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the LORD’s commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.” So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing. Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the LORD’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire, he is God.” Then all the people said, “What you say is good.” Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.” So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. “O Baal, answer us!” they shouted. But there was no response; no-one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or travelling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no-one answered, no-one paid attention. Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to me.” They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Your name shall be Israel.” With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench round it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, “Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.” “Do it again,” he said, and they did it again. “Do it a third time,” he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench. At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.” Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The LORD, he is God! The LORD, he is God!”*

The Church stands in need of a few men like Elijah, who will dare to face up to the brazen sinners who dictate this society’s every way of life.

Matthew 11:16-17 [NIV] *“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the market-places and calling out to others: “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.””*

Sin in the full proportions of a plague has all but destroyed our civilisation while the church has played like children in the market place.

Have we lost the spirit of discernment till we no longer realise what spirit is influencing the Church?

How long will we hide in caves while the modern day Ahab’s and Jezebel’s continue to pollute God’s temple and ravage the people?

Surely we all as Christians should give this some serious thought and prayer before it is too late!!

The Power is available to oppose the evil in this society, but where are the people who are willing to be instruments of that Power, the Holy Spirit?

Somewhere there is I hope, as yet unknown, one who will hear the call of God and with great love and courage become the conscience of the Church.

Somewhere I hope there is a modern-day Elijah, awaiting for God to place him on centre stage. At first he will be considered uncharitable and harsh, but as soon as he gets the prophets of Baal on the run, others will tag along behind him trying to look as if they had been beside him all the time.

Well, such a person cannot come a day too soon.