

Satan's Desire for You and the Church
5-4-14 AM

Spiritual Warfare is spoken of often in the Bible. Ephesians 5 and II Corinthians 10 both illustrate our battle with the forces of darkness in terms of soldiers and warfare. Yet how does our enemy war against us? We know that our "adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8). How does he seek to devour us? One way is by separating us from spiritual enablers. Three such enablers are: The Word, The Church and The Home

In regards to the church, we know that Jesus built the church (Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 2:19-20) to be indestructible (at the universal level). Why Did Jesus Build It? Because we have several great needs in order to make it to heaven. The first is fellowship (Philippians 2:1) and the second is correction (Galatians 6:1). In order to invalidate the church, Satan must:

- Make you see the church as unnecessary
- Make you forsake the assembly
- Make you resent the brethren

First, he must get you to believe that you don't need fellowship or spiritual relationships. Perhaps he will convince you that you have plenty of friends in the world. Sure they are worldly, but he whispers in your ear that "I am influencing them" rather than them influencing me (I Corinthians 15:33). We might even admit that worldly friends do not bother me; their worldliness does not offend me. However, you DO need fellowship and spiritual encouragement (I Corinthians 4:7-10). At the same time, the Brethren need YOU to encourage them, and your absence is a matter of judgment (Matthew 25:34-40)

Second, Satan must convince you that while many people need to be corrected, you are not one of them. He will convince you that "nobody needs to tell me what to do" and that you are "free to do what I want". Yet such is the talk of a fool. You DO need correction, as do all men. "*He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, But he who refuses correction goes astray.*" (Proverbs 10:17)

Third, Satan desires to cause you to resent the Brethren. He will plant words into your ear such as "hypocrites", "unloving" and "inconsiderate". He will not let you consider for a moment that if you permit a hypocrite to come between you and God, the hypocrite is necessarily closer to God. He will not let you see that your judgment of unloving is likely a reflection of your own attitudes, and that consideration is a two - way street.

If Satan can make you see the church as unnecessary, make you forsake the assembly, or make you resent the brethren, then your spiritual warfare is lost; you have been devoured by the lion.

So how do we win? First, we need to learn what it is to be merciful. That entails understanding that we all need improvement. Romans 12:1-2 speaks to the need for everyone to grow; it begins with ourselves. Second, we need to forgive the brethren their weaknesses (Galatians 6:1-2). If we ask Jesus to forgive us, part of the condition is that we forgive others.