

The Weapon Of An Armed Mind

1 Peter 4:1-6 KJV Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; [2] That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. [3] For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: [4] Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: [5] Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. [6] For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

I. INTRODUCTION—CONTRASTS IN 1ST AND 2ND PETER

-That old Apostle Peter dearly loved to contrast things in his epistles. Perhaps it was the nature and force of his mind and personality. He knew what it was to experience the highs and lows of life and therefore when the Holy Ghost moved on him to write, the Spirit used his special bent to help us to see more clearly in the 21st Century.

-His epistles scope out the positives and negatives in a single scrawl of his pen on the papyrus. He shows us the way by giving us an idea of where the stepping-stones and the stumbling blocks lie in our path.

-He does it with that single little word “but.” What we may see as a conjunction, Peter uses it in a far greater measure to help us to see the ultimate purpose of God. This word is found fifty times in forty-seven verses and the Apostle helps us to see into God’s purpose.

- 1 Peter 1:12—Prophets had elements of salvation revealed to them but we experienced something they could not.

- 1 Peter 1:15—Don't get lost in the former lusts of ignorance but be holy as God is holy.
- 1 Peter 1:19—Gold and silver could not redeem us but the precious blood of Jesus Christ could.
- 1 Peter 1:20—Jesus Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world but did not come until the recent times.
- 1 Peter 1:23—Not born of corruptible seed but of the incorruptible Word of God.
- 1 Peter 1:25—The flesh of man and the glory of his existence will pass but the Word of the Lord endures forever.
- 1 Peter 2:4—Jesus Christ rejected and disallowed by men but chosen of God and precious.
- 1 Peter 2:9—There are men of great disobedience but the church is a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people that is possessed by God.
- 1 Peter 2:10—Were not a people but now we are . . . No mercy available to us but now have the depths of mercy.
- 1 Peter 2:25—We are like stray sheep but now have returned by the Chief Shepherd.
- 1 Peter 3:4—Don't seek to glorify the outward person in clothing, gold, and silver but let the hidden heart of the man take priority.
- 1 Peter 4:2—A man can no longer live in the captivity of his flesh and lusts but to the will of God.

-These are just a few of the examples that are noted in these two epistles.

II. THE ARMOR OF THE CROSS

-There is a great contrast that is noted in the passage that we read. Men who have been redeemed no longer live in the captivity of their lustful flesh but in the power and armory of the Cross.

-Peter asserts:

1 Peter 4:1 KJV Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

-He stresses to us the fact that our minds become weapons when we arm them with the wisdom and power of the Cross. Peter is writing to a church that finds itself under great pressure of persecution.

-Peter was not a man who was removed from the pressure of the persecution. He was writing to us while he was under great duress. Clement of Alexandria gives us the tradition that states the Peter and his wife were murdered at the same time. He wrote that while Peter watched the killers take her to her own cross, he called out to her both encouraging and comforting that they were about to be taken to Heaven. He addressed her by her name and said, "Remember thou the Lord."

-Prior to their execution, Peter wrote expressions of comfort to that scattered group of believers. Peter notes the sufferings of Jesus Christ and makes the connection between their own sufferings. You find them scattered throughout the chapters of his epistle.

- 1 Peter 2:20
- 1 Peter 2:21
- 1 Peter 2:23
- 1 Peter 3:14
- 1 Peter 3:18
- 1 Peter 4:1
- 1 Peter 4:16
- 1 Peter 4:19
- 1 Peter 5:10

-We suffer at the hands of carnal men who are driven by a dark underworld of evil. Yet the devil has to use these people to fulfill his task.

- Carnal people oppose godliness.
- Carnal people fight against those who live godly.
- Carnal people find that holiness irritates and chafes at conscience.
- Carnal people lash out with verbal attacks with cruel words.
- Carnal people sometimes even resort to bodily harm.
- Carnal people hate God and what He stands for.
- Carnal people attempt to halt the progress of the Kingdom of God.

Jay Rathman found himself in one of the most difficult situations of life several years ago. He was in the Tehema Wildlife Area near Red Bluff in northern California. He had climbed to a ledge on a rocky gorge and just as he raised his head to look over the ledge, he sensed movement to the right of his face. A coiled rattlesnake struck with lightning speed just missing his right ear.

The snake was four-feet long but the nightmare was just beginning. Its fangs got snagged in the collar of his turtleneck wool sweater. Rathman fell backwards and as he was falling, the snake managed to coil itself around his neck. As he was sliding down the steep slope bouncing off of brush and lava rocks, he managed to reach up and get the snake behind its head. At the same time he could feel the venom of the snake running down his neck as it had continued to try to strike him during the fall. The problem with the fall was that he got lodged in some rocks on his way down and he was on an incline with one of his feet wedged keeping him head down and feet up.

But to even further complicate things, he lost his grip on the head of the snake and it began to strike him in the face hitting him just below his eye. Despite the snake attacking him, he managed to get his hand on its neck and literally choked the life out of it. He was so shook up by the whole affair that he had to pry his fingers open from the around the snake.

He estimated the whole thing probably took twenty-minutes to play out. Who would have thought that a turtleneck sweater would be his salvation!

-Peter comes with the authority of the Word and tells the church that will have to arm their minds with the mind of Christ. There is a lot of talk in our time about gun control but very few are talking about mind-control.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus exhorts Philippians 2:5.

1 Peter 4:1 KJV Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

-Peter exhorts also that the saints arm their minds just as the Roman soldiers would put on their armor for battle and cinch up their weapons so they could be used. This is not just a suggestion but also an imperative command that comes from the Lord.

-What happens to a man's mind when he arms it with the mind of Christ? There are some principles that come from the Word that helps us to see what takes place.

A. The Power of Peace

-There is something about a fully armed soldier or a division of armed tanks and so forth that promotes peace. The enemy is very hesitant to boldly attack a man who is armed to the teeth.

-A man who is at peace with God will be at peace with himself. A soul that has been converted has great power over sin that attempts to overtake him.

-The man who has peace in his conscience is a man who is greatly blessed. The sin of Achan was the sin of a defiled conscience. The sin that troubled his conscience destroyed him and then it destroyed his family.

-Those men who arm their minds with the sufferings and cross of Christ find the great advantage of a holy walk and the life of obedience. The devil loves to get us out of our position of holy walking and holy obedience.

When Ronald Reagan was President of the United States, he established the importance of having a strong military for the purpose of keeping peace. The principle was called the "Peace through Strength" principle. This plan led to the end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and its collapse. The wall that separated East Berlin and West Berlin was

torn down. Who can ever forget his words as he stood at the Brandenburg Gate and said, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

-Peace is promoted in the lives of all men who are willing to give themselves to the duty of obedience. It causes strength and restoration to surge up within the soul of a saint.

Ephesians 2:14 KJV For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

-Peace also brings great comfort to the soul that is under the attack of the devil.

B. The Power of Preparation

-The saint of God has to arm himself so that he will be prepared for danger. There are attacks that will come from the devil and there will be conflicts with enemies of the soul. But when a man immerses himself in the preparation process, he becomes qualified.

-Godly discipline exercises itself in such a way that strength pours out of his life.

- Daily prayer.
- Daily worship.
- Daily communion with God.
- Daily put on the armor.
- Daily make a commitment to godly character.
- Daily turn away from the trinkets of this world.
- Daily fellowship with other believers.
- Daily get into the Word of God.

-It isn't a mistake that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a portion of the king's meat or with the wine (Dan. 1:8). He understood the power of an armed mind and that he had to prepare himself for the occasion.

-Peter would reiterate just a few verses over the importance of being sober, serious, alert, vigilant, on-guard, and fully aware of the enemy who seeks to destroy! (1 Peter 5:8).

C. The Power of Endorsement

-Arming ourselves with the mind of Christ creates the power of peace; the power of preparation but it also carries with it the power of endorsement. We are to arm our minds with His mind to enforce the authority that He has provided for us.

-That power gives us victory over temptation and fear.

2 Timothy 1:7 KJV For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Romans 8:37 KJV Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

John 1:12 KJV But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

D. The Power of Protection

-Peace . . . Preparation . . . Endorsement and lastly, by arming our minds with His mind, the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are given protection.

-We are to arm ourselves with a mind that is committed to the Lord to protect what is precious. The word “precious” in the Greek, TIMEEOS (timayos), means the things that are valuable, costly, honored, esteemed, loved, and held in great regard.

-All through the Word we find things that are precious to every saint of God:

- Precious anointing.
- Precious trials.

- Precious faith.
- Precious blood.
- A precious Savior.
- Precious promises.
- A precious Cornerstone.
- Precious tears and seed.

-I encourage you to do everything within your power to have this mind in you!

III. CONCLUSION—WHY WE NEED THIS WEAPON OF AN ARMED MIND

-We need the weapon of an armed mind because of the fierce battle that we are in every day. It is imperative to know that the mind of Christ can sustain us when nothing else can.

-We need the weapon of an armed mind because of our need to conquer our flesh and our fear when we are confronted by suffering and persecution.

-We need the weapon of an armed mind so that the Gospel can transform our whole life.