

A Warrior in The Image of My Father

Exodus 15:3 The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.

Nothing worth having comes without some kind of fight – Bruce Cockburn

There is a lot of talk in our school systems, media, and culture about bullies and bullying. I remember as a young man in Jr. High and High School, I was frequently bullied. I was shoved in lockers, dumped in trash cans, had my personal property destroyed among many other humiliating things. After my first two children were in school I had this awful thought, “What if my children are bullied?” I made a decision as a parent. I told both of my boys that if they were ever bullied by anyone, that they should stand up and defend themselves. If a bully pushed them down or tried to hurt them, I gave them permission and even showed them how to defend themselves.

You may be asking yourselves, why in the world would you tell your children to fight back? Doesn't the Bible tell us to turn the other cheek?

Matthew 5:38-45

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

John Eldredge makes this point: If you take one passage of scripture out of context, you'll end up ignoring all other scriptures and come to absurd conclusions.

For instance:

1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

“Well, that settles it; no man should ever get married!”

Matthew 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

Then why do we have any possessions at all? I hope you see how foolish this logic really is.

Most of Jesus's counsel about not resisting evil had to do with not resisting Roman authority.

A Roman soldier could legally require you to carry his pack one stadia; Jesus said then to carry it two. A Roman soldier could legally strike you on the cheek; therefore, turn the other cheek. Under the law, your coat could be held as a surety on a debt, so Jesus said to give them your cloak as well. Paul used his Roman citizenship to his advantage against unjust imprisonment and beatings. Jesus counsel had to do with not rebelling against an overwhelming army or government, however unjust that government appeared to be. He was not endorsing the government or its practices, he was dissuading his followers from trying to establish the Messianic kingdom by force of arms.

But if we look at this in context, it was not a teaching on absolute pacifism either.

What did Jesus mean when he told the disciples to go and buy a sword and to carry a purse?

Luke 22:36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

The sword in this case was a short sword called a Makhaira used mostly in self-defense.

It was likely that since the disciples, now required to carry a supply of money for their missionary trips, would encounter brigands on the highways and byways. Under Roman law, it was legal for any person to carry such a sword for self-defense.

It is one thing to be persecuted and die for your faith in Christ as a testimony and a witness; It is another to be at the mercy of thieves and lawless men, who have no interest or religious motives.

Prior to his crucifixion, the disciples were told to travel without money and receive hospitality wherever they went, but he was indicating it would be different. They would need to carry provisions (the bag), a purse (money), and a makhaira.

However, the sword was shown not to be used to establish a Messianic kingdom, when he counseled Peter to put away the sword and then healed the ear of the temple guard.

The reality is that the Bible teaches the wise use of strength and the power of forgiveness.

Mark 3:1-6

1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Jesus became angry with the merchants who were cheating his people in the temple:

Mark 11:15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

Jesus was angry when they still criticized him for healing on the Sabbath:

Luke 13:10-17

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

As Christians we bear the image of Jesus.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

We also embody that the Lord's image as a fierce warrior. (Exodus 15)

The Slayer of the leviathan. (Isaiah 27)

He comes on a white horse conquering and to conquer. (Revelation 6)

He cast the devil out of heaven. (Revelation 12)

He cast the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire. (Revelation 19)

He bids the dragon for a thousand years. (Revelation 20)

We must realize that, as Christians, we need to stand up to our adversaries; stand up for the truth. We have a battle to fight. It is a battle for every person that does not have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Stand up and fight! Make a difference for Jesus today!