**The Weapons of Our Warfare**

 *I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!—****2****I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.****3****For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.****4****For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.****5****We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,****6****being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:1-6, ESV)*

 The weapons of our warfare are spiritual, and not fleshly[[1]](#footnote-1). May the Lord bless you, dear brothers and sisters, as we talk today about the subject of spiritual warfare. Today we are commemorating the martyrs of Vartanants, remembering that they were martyred not only for their own compatriots, but even more so for the love of Christ. In that martyrdom, we see our forefathers’ priorities in life. Yes, it is true that we lost 1,066 heroes on the battlefield on that day, including and especially General Vartan himself. Before that event, however, the priest[[2]](#footnote-2) Ghevont led the army in taking communion as a spiritual preparation for that very physical but spiritually consequential battle. Similarly, the Apostle Paul was also waging a spiritual battle, according to our reading today. His battle was connected to His preaching of the Gospel. His work with the church was under criticism. Yes, his life had been in danger at other times in his ministry, but this battle was much more central to his being than those were. The accusations touched his own calling as a servant of God, just as someone might question the genuineness of our own faith by interrogation. Therefore, we will take both these events, Vartanants and the Apostle’s defense of his faith and see the connection both between them and also to our lives today. (Let us see how that applies today…)

 For us believers in Christ, spiritual battles need Spiritual[[3]](#footnote-3) weapons. Let’s talk about Vartanants first: we all know very well that faith was the dominant reason why we remember the letter of Vartan Mamigonian to the Persian king, saying in it, among other things, “your sword, our necks”. So, having that in mind, if Armenians did not fight for faith, then just as Vasag Suni betrayed the main force and made a temporary deal with the Persians[[4]](#footnote-4), the other generals and princes could have easily followed suit, playing political games, faking a religious conversion in a ruse against the enemy pagan king. For Vartan and his comrades, however, they preferred to get ready for a “meaningful”[[5]](#footnote-5) death, rather than to deny the faith of their fathers, who was Christ.

 For the Apostle Paul, there was a danger of his work being sabotaged by false apostles and critics. His battle was much more personal, and we understand from his writings that he had been quite soft-spoken and patient with the Corinthians in the past. However, those immature people had criticized him in his absence, as if he was not able to raise his voice to lead when he was physically present with them. For the Apostle, it was of utmost importance that it be clear to the ones causing the problems that he was ready to punish them, if necessary, provided that the majority of the church was with him – unfortunately, we see in the letter that they were not at the time of writing. Paul was ready with this Spiritual weapons. We see them mentioned in other letters; he was ready to pray, to preach the Gospel, to put a stop to and to punish those who threatened to derail the preaching of the Gospel. For Paul, the battle was for the continuation of the spread of the truth of the Gospel. The Vartanants event was a battle against the dangers spiritual and political slavery; in the Apostle’s case, it was against the potential spiritual slavery of the Corinthian believers, as well as the continuation of the preaching ministry of Paul.

 When we think about spiritual warfare, it is good to take a look at the state of our weapons. In what shape are our prayers, our knowledge of Scripture, our network of believer-friends, which prays for us and for whom we pray? How is our patience, our generosity, our wisdom? Do our weapons of spiritual warfare function well? Or could it be that our prayers are without God’s Spirit, and that we do not remember what the contents of Mark chapter 17 hold?[[6]](#footnote-6) Regarding our faith-network, do our brothers and sisters connected in our support circle prefer to sleep on Sundays instead of coming into church or having a time of faith-based discussions? Similarly, it is not healthy for us as Christians when our patience is running out quickly, or we find ourselves on the opposite end of generosity, or on the rough end of a cycle of immature or unwise life-decisions, damaging our relationships with our faith family.

 The above is, at its core, our spiritual war today, if we are believers and know Jesus as Lord and Savior. It is imperative that we know the nature of our battles, and to wage them in an optimum manner, using our spiritual weapons, which flow from our faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

 Therefore, on this day of commemoration of the Vartanants Battle, let us make and decision and commitment to strengthen and to use our faith-based Spiritual weapons for our spiritual battles.

 May the Lord give us that awareness and discernment in our daily struggles.

 The Lord bless you all. Amen.

1. Worldly, not inspired by the Holy Spirit. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Literally “elder” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Capital “S” to remind us that our strength comes from the Lord the Holy Spirit. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. an act so heinous that a new word was coined, “to pull a Vasag”, in Armenian, meaning to betray. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Or “conscious” death, meaning knowing what you’re dying for… [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Facetious, of course – you get the point. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)