

Fighting in Faith

The following was shared by Tim Shorey on Sunday, August 9, 2009 as a conclusion to his message on the enemy within: the believer's battle with the flesh. It is offered in this format by request and we hope it serves the faith and hope of every true soldier in the fight for holiness.

“I cannot “talk” my flesh away by repeating clichés, although I must *preach truth* to my own soul; I cannot defeat the flesh by sheer force of will, although I am to *will* against it; I cannot kill the flesh by mere spiritual disciplines and habits, although I cannot grow strong to overcome the flesh without them; I cannot resist the flesh by sheer inner fortitude, although I must resist it, if need be, to the point of shedding blood; I cannot defeat the flesh by passive faith in God's grace, letting go and letting God, although I cannot defeat it without a resting and calm trust in the grace of my Savior; I cannot conquer the flesh by church going or sacraments or religious devotion alone, although I cannot conquer it if I stay alone, and if I fail to practice these things, the flesh will devour my soul.

How then do I defeat the flesh? It is by “*faith working through love*”. I must know and face and confront and go to war with my flesh in faith; in faith that I belong to Christ, that his Spirit dwells within me, that I have already crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts, and that victory will be mine through Christ my Savior and Lord and King!

The great need of the Christian life is for faith—real, alive, and present—faith that the Holy that is in us and for us is greater than the evil that is in us and against us. We must be men and women who carry confidence and victory in our hearts, unwavering, undaunted, undiminished, no matter how fierce the battle or strong the foe.

We must be those who know with certainty that we are born of God, indwelt with God, carried by God, victorious in God. Be sure of this: we need to wrestle and pray and fight and mortify and labor and strive and press on. But we must do so confident in the God who promises us the victory. No enemy within or without can take us to defeat. No sin—no matter how strong, no matter how habitual, no matter how deeply entrenched, no matter how big or serious or dark, can withstand faith in the power of grace and God and the gospel.

By His grace and truth we will prevail. “A mighty fortress is our God; a bulwark never failing, our helper He amid the flood of mortals ills prevailing!” Let us arise as the people of God—called to be holy in an unholy world, and in the face of great evil still within, and let us prove the sufficiency of grace for the glory of God and the eternal joy of our never-dying souls.

Even so, we believe, Lord Jesus; help our unbelief. And we will go forth with You to the victory. Amen.”