Christian warfare

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Donald Macdonald

[0:00] Verse 23. I see another law in my members, warning against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

My text will really be from verse 14, but we have read the letters before, and we need not read them again.
Last Sabbath I spoke to you about the spiritual enemies of the Church of Christ. The Church of Sahol, and the people of God as individuals.
Now I spoke to you not so much about the world, or about the depraved heart, which every one of us has, but about the invisible spirits that surround us, which belong to the other world, about the supernatural force that we have.
And I'm not going to refer to that much today. For the benefit of those who might not have been here last Sabbath, I spoke from Ephesians, chapter 6, about the spiritual principalities in heavenly places, that war against the Church of Christ.
[1:51] And I told you that these men, the supernatural spirits, the fears of the pit, in which there is an order, a gradation of order, a hierarchy, some higher than others, that they all have one time, that they all have one time, who is to fight against the Church of God.

Well, enough about that. I spoke about it last Sabbath. Now, this Christian warfare, which I want to speak to you a little today again, is an inward experience for every true Christian.
Now, if you and I are Christians, we know what it is for sin to war against us. And we know also what it is for us to war against sin.
Now, that is always true of Christians. There are many things that, in which Christians differ, many opinions about which they differ, regarding denominations and various things.
But there is one thing on which they are all agreed. And that is that they are conscious of the motions of sin within them.
[3:35] And that they are also conscious of a higher power than themselves, persisting these motions of sin. Every Christian is conscious of that.

Now, I may like the Christian to a person who has pious in his bosom. That is the depraved heart. That is in us all. Now, that would be bad enough in itself and enough to consume us. But there is far worse than that, to be said.
When you have a fire, when you have a fire, it may be slow burning, until you use the bellows to blow it up.
Now, there are devilish bellows stirring up the inward lust that is in us.
[4:35] And these are the spiritual principalities and powers in heavenly places that I was talking to you about last night. They don't leave us alone.

They don't leave us even to the depraved heart. And that's enough. But they come in, and they add impetus to the motions of sin which is in ourselves, and they make much of a thousand times worse.
So that this is really the Christian warfare inwardly. He's warring against these spirits that are untwashed upon themselves.
Still in his passions and lusts and warring against the lobe of his mind. Now, first of all, we are here, and probably many of you will be surprised, at my first heading.
We are here, a matter of comfort. Don't you see, how can any man derive comfort from the fact that he is wretched, miserable?
[5:51] Doesn't even the Apostle say when he talks about these things, oh, wretched man that I am. Yes, he does. What comfort then is derived from the fact that you have this warfare in your heart.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And I may say, as I speak of this, that it is very likely that every Christian in my hearing today thinks that he has the worst warfare of all inside him.
I am positive that you think that I haven't got the kind of thoughts, the kind of bad thoughts that you have.
I'm at the difference sitting beside you, if he's a Christian, that he hasn't got the kind of evil thoughts that you have. I'm positive that you think like that.
I'm sure that you think that you have the worst thoughts that could come into anybody's mind. But I also think that about myself. I am quite positive that there's not one temperament inside the church that has the achievable thoughts as I have.
[7:11] But then, when we say that, this is a Christian experience, this is what we all think. Whether it be true or not, I don't know.

but this is what we think. Now, what is the comfort to be derived from this? The comfort is this, that the dead have no feeling, they have no experience at all, either good or bad.
And when a person is dead in trespasses and sins, he has no experience of the motions of sin. It's only when he's made alive that he gets that experience.
Now, this is the comfort, friend. If you are one of those people who is troubled by sin, by evil thoughts, corrupt thoughts, one who's conscious that there is a power washing upon you sometimes, other than yourself, a spiritual principality, wicked spirits spirits that are at work upon you, instilling thoughts into your mind that would not be there if they were not suggested, and you're left wretched and miserable, and you say, well, there's nobody in the world like me.
I say this to you, you have these things, these thoughts, and that experience because you are a child of God.
[8:49] And there isn't a more sure mark of a child of God from one end of the Bible to the other than that very thing. You may remember a time in your life unless you were converted very young, but these things did not trouble you.

Your thoughts were just as evil as they are today. But they didn't cause you any concern. Nobody knew about them anyway. And it was nobody's business and you delighted in them.
The more evil there were very often, the more you demanded in them. The realm of your imagination in its corruption brought you tremendous delight. Now it's the other way about.
Well, why then when nobody sees what goes on within your heart, why are you so trampled about it? Because you know it is against God. So then, you have this discomfort because you are alive for the dead of no discomfort.
But you have your living soul. Now, another thing I might say to you is this, that it is far better to have the severest temptations from the devil than to have no temptation at all.
[10:07] Than to be insensitive to the temptations of the devil. Because it's not to our best you can have said that there is no devil worse than no devil.

And this is quite true. For you let alone there is something wrong. If you have anything in you work while for the devil to tempt then he'll tempt you.
You say in the old days what pirates roamed the sea. Martin uses this illustration. Martin, one of the Puritans, uses the illustration.
He says that if there was a ship coming across the sea with a cackle or tinder the tyros, men like Blackbeard and people like these, they wouldn't bother with them at all.
They'd leave them well alone. But if there was a Spanish galleon coming from South America laden with gold and jewels they would go after that one.
[11:10] And so my friends if you have the jewels of the grace of God in your heart then the pirates of hell will be after you. They'll be after you all the time.

They'll never give you respite. them beyond without you. So then this is a matter of comfort for you. Sore as they experience it. And another thing I would say is this.
Don't you complain about these things to God. Don't ask them to be taken away. If you do the day may come when you would gladly have your warfare back rather than being sensitive to evil thoughts and to corruptions and to the temptations of the devil.
Oh friends don't want to get rid of them as long as you need. Always ask God to keep you so sensitive of sin that it shall trouble you even in its faintest motion.
but if you complain God might feed you and you might be left and become insensitive and lie down in a false peace.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[12:24] Now that is not a proper situation for the Christian. Well now another thing about this experience is that Paul consented all the time to the law of God that he was holy and just and good.

Yet no converted man can say that. You think of it the law that stood out the sin in him the law that condemned him for his sin he goes back to that law and he says the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good.
Although the law was condemning himself for his sins the law he said is holy and just and good.
Now can you say that? In other words can you find any fault in God or with the law of God?
The law of God condemns you. If the law of God pierces your conscience it's the law fault. Now what do you say? The law is holy and just and good.
Well my friends I'm sure there was a day when you wouldn't say that about the law of God. You found fault with the law. You found fault with it for being too strict. You found fault with it because it referred to the realm of your thought as well as to the realm of your actions.
[13:58] But now you say the law is holy unjust and good. Now let's come to the warfare itself to the experience described.

Paul says about it I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind. Now I'm not going to go into the various contradictions that have been held about this part of scripture because I don't think that is going to be profitable.
or necessary in a sermon like this. A lot of people have made doubt that this was Paul's description of himself in his unconverted days.
And there is at present a series of sermons coming into Revelation in which the author has a clear opinion in which he postulates that Paul was neither converted nor unconverted when he describes this experience.
But he describes an experience that he had during a period of conviction before this condition but the after he had been awakened. Now as far as we can see this just does not make sense either.
[15:25] that the general consensus of the opinion among reformed theologians is that this experience really doesn't need to create any continuity.

That it is so personal to every believing sinners that there is no difficulty about it.
You read it for yourself and you can see quite plainly that if you are a Christian it reflects what goes on in your own mind from time to time from day to day.
Now then we see that in this world Paul was conscious of another law at work upon his own nature.
He doesn't disavow his own responsibility when he says yet not die but sin that is in me it is not disavow of his own identity with sin or of his own responsibility for sin.
[16:35] He doesn't mean that. He doesn't mean that he is not sinning. Of course he is sinning. When you have an evil thought you are the sinners. You can't think of sinning enough that we you and I we the sinners name.

But the point is that this sin part of which is in ourselves and part of which comes from without is dissociated from us in a certain sense.
Yet not I. It is not my better sin. It is my law sin. It is sin in me. But I have another law warring against that law.
We shall speak of that in a moment. Now this law which he found in his mind warring which he found in his memory warring against the law of his mind, the law of sin, assisted by these supernatural power that I spoke about, has different degrees of intensity.
It's not the same every day. Sometimes I don't know if I should say this or not. I don't know. I hope you will not misunderstand me.
[17:53] Sometimes I feel that this law sin can be entorferment. I believe that heaven can enjoy such communion with Christ.

I can believe that a Christian can be so happy in the Lord that there are times when he even forgets, when he's not conscious of the fact that there is in him.
I fully believe that. I have always been of the opinion that this view put forward by John Wesley of perfectionism.
Has been a little bit misunderstood? I almost found it difficult that a preacher like John Wesley really preach that a heaven could be perfect without anything at all.
But John Wesley was a man who lived near to God. Exceptional in here. And I believe that John Wesley enjoyed so much of communion with Jesus Christ that there were times when he was altogether unconscious of the motions of sin in his flesh.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[19:06] And we had times like that too but they didn't last very long. We had times when we became oblivious that we were in the world. We became oblivious of every evil thing and which were just like the disciples with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration having paid view of Christ in his glory and we forgot about everything else.

We didn't care about anything else. It was Christ nothing but Christ for us all the time. Now that's what leads me to say that I do believe that at times this law this evil law can at times be dormant and God in his mercy for deeds the adversary to tempt us in these particular times.
And then like the waves of the sea even if there is a calm like that so the rhythm begins and there are various degrees of intensity sometimes the waves move and greater and lesser more less and you know what this is you have your days of comparative peace you have your days of turmoil and so it goes on which is conscious of emotions of sea and then there are times when this law like the fury of the Atlantic in a north westerly wind it rages furiously as if it would carry everything before it as if it would smash through the rocks as if it would take you away from your very foundations yes friends during the pilgrim's progress we find something about this need john bennon was not at all ignorant of these things and he had stride times he had times when he warred with a poly he had times when he had to resist not only his own propensity to go back not only that he had to master his own fear of the lions and of the adversaries at eastern but he had times when he was conscious of the fears of the pit and dwelt upon his mind and these were the most high experiences that he had and you know there are surprises of sin what
I may call surprises of sin show me a Christian here today who's been one for twenty years or more and let us ask him the question would you have believed twenty years ago that there was so much corruption in your mind as you know today there is and I know that you answer this no I will not and this is what I call the surprises of sin and I want to tell you who are young Christians here today I will not be with you when you grow old but wherever you will be remember what I say today that sin is going to give you the most terrible surprises that you ever got you think you are conscious of evil thoughts today but if you are living twenty years thirty years from the day you get the biggest surprises of your life and the nearer you are getting to your grave the greater the surprises seem to be surprises of sin new sins all sins coming with fresh power and with new hope feel for the surprises of sin and a couple empty love they say like one of all astonished and distressed
I turned my eyes within my heart with loads of guilt depressed the feet of every sin what clouds have even found we say what while affection says envy and pride is deceit and guilt distress are slated distrust are slated fear and we not consciously think well then this is what this man is talking about see friends we are not new to any temptation and we have to walk continually against these evil powers because Satan is ready to take advantage of every opportunity presented to him if we are well off if we're absolute if we're prosperous if we're happy he'll take advantage of that and make you forget
[24:36] God if you go down if you're distressed if you become depressed if things go against you he will take advantage of that and he said you are not one of God's children if you were God wouldn't deal with you like that why do you hope for it what do you hope for surely God wouldn't deal with you like that and he goes on and he takes every opportunity to show us to take this now as the difference in degree of things that he also different degree of duration this is rather a difficult thing to speak of because it would take up too much time especially if I want to give you illustrations no friends I'm not able to tell you the duration of any temptation because the duration is not the same in every case sometimes you get a wicked thought passing through your mind like the flash of a lightning it's as quick as that it just flushes through your mind and it's away thanks be to

God sometimes love is snogged it may continue for a day or for a week or for a month or even for years and we have accounts and you can read some of them in Archibald Alexander famous book on religious experience you have accounts of real true Christian people who would pursue by the devil for years on end men who were Christian preachers and they could not say within years that they had one moment of peace see we can't say how long they would leave but they do differ in degrees of judicia now you may be listening to me today and say surely God would not leave me so long under the power of ease surely
I would not be so long without getting relief if God delighted in me surely nobody takes so long but you see that's been the experience of other people and I would never say to you well you soon get relief I don't know if you will or not you will get relief in a good time in the good grace of God now then how do these things show themselves at least some of the ways in which to show themselves I

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

tell you just briefly all I can do is mention if you better think of that you see I tell you one of the ways in which you war against this war against you and you resist it one of them is reluctance to pray do you know the difference between longing for somebody to go away out of your house so that you get aside between yourself and
God into the private place do you know the difference between that and the reluctance when you are all alone and you have every opportunity to pray but you know I have to go and pray that's what I am referring to him that's it there is uneven power at work upon you blunting the edge of your spiritual appetite the devil is at work upon you he wants to keep you from praying and do you know the difference between when you are in prayer and you earnest and you pour out your heart to God and you could pray for me do you know the difference between that and spiritual frame of mind you have every opportunity and quietness and yet you can't get yourself into the frame of mind that you say that you really pray do you know the difference between real pain of
God when you take hold of his promises and in belief you pray and somehow or other don't seem to grasp the promises you don't lay hold upon the faithfulness of God do you know the difference between you well then sometimes you are conquered and sometimes you conquer in the warfare sometimes you are conquered you conquer you are able to resist sometimes you are conquered not necessarily falling into open sin but you are conquered this secretly and inwardly you are conquered sometimes you are conquered by doubting that you never believed sometimes you are conquered by doubting that God is not sufficient for your needs and that's a very common way of the devil conquering us it's difficult to get rid of that one friend and you who are old experienced [30:07] Christians know what I'm talking about after all our experience after all these years of experiencing the painfulness of God something comes our way and then there's still the doubt God will help you there isn't enough there isn't enough for you oh I like that my grace is sufficient for thee and I often hear it used in prayer the thought always goes through my mind that I discredit anyone or doubt anyone well I wonder if you know what you're talking about yes it's true it's true friends it's quite true but it's another thing to note it's another thing to believe it's another thing to grasp between and back against the wall it's another thing to know it when as an illustration that I use very often when your doctor tells you no

I have done all that I can your case is hopeless believe then my grace is sufficient for you it's easy not in the day when the sun is shining but when the clouds come down and the darkness is thinking that friends leave you and you know that things are difficult to believe that God's grace is sufficient you see friends the devil instills the doubt that it isn't you and you are going to believe this is Paul puts it in a very strong way he says I am sold under sin sold under sin after he said I am subject to an alien power a power that is stronger than myself infinitely stronger than myself I am given to this thing
I resolve that I won't be but I am given to this thing he says I would not I would not be like this in other words he says I determine that I will not be like this I determine not but in spite of his determination he is like that dear Lord says someone and shall we ever live at this poor die great our loves are so cold to thee and thine to us so great well there is one couple in which I will mention to you I don't want to keep you much longer but it is uninterested key from the experimental point of view the point of your subjective religion religion John Bunyan whose work I often refer you especially to the pilgrim's progress do you remember that experience of a man called
Mr. People Mind well People Mind wasn't a strong Christian he was always doubting and he was always afraid and one day he was caught by giant sleigh dude and giant sleigh dude showed no mercy to anyone and then he told Mr.
People Mind that he was going to be killed I think tomorrow and that he was going to take all the flesh of the bones and eat him and the poor man in the fee mind was cringling until he remembered he remembered he was comforted by the man that giant sleigh good never picked the boats of anyone who was taking into his castle against his will that was his comfort see and that is the very thing that Paul says here I delight in the law of God after the end of man the evil that I do I would not I am determined I won't do it but it overcomes me when I go into a passion into evil temper [34:51] I determine I never do it again but I find another law when I am slot full and reluctant to pray I determine that I will never do it again but I am conquered it is built against your will and giant slave good will never pick the flesh of your bones because it's against your will what more than I tell you than that well then have we got a hate to sin and a love to holiness are we sure are we quite sure that we don't mistake either to these there are sins but everybody here hates there are sins

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

and there are people all the people in my congregation today every one of you there are sins and you wouldn't do them for a million pounds

I know that but what I mean by hatred to sin do you hate the very essence of it do you hate the very nature of it do you hate the origin of it do you hate sin in every aspect of it not particular sin not certain child sin but sin it same this evil wicked thing do you hate it and do you not hold it not that big of it will be whole not hold it but do it well friends if you do then you are like poor and you will find the consolation in these words of Romans chapter 7 and I am not sorry for you at all for being in this water miserable though it may be and there is no discharge in it you can't get rid of it until your dying day but

I do feel sorry for those who live in sin the christless souls who although there is a war going on against them and is being conquered there is no power within them to resist the evil these are people to be did in may god bless to preserve meditation in his brain oh lord we would pray with another almighty king of saints these tyrant lumps of june drive the old serpent from the seat and all our love renew may we be given grace day by day to resist all evil and may we be among those who will one day quit their armor and enter into that place for there is no sin no sorrow no devil no temptation amen we shall sing in psalm 41 from verse 11 psalm 41 from verse 11 to the tune St. Douglas Stannan by this I know that certainly I favored and by because my hateful every triumphs not always psalm 41 at 31 to the end of the psalm to the Jews at Lancaster M ■■■■ by B Gabriele H lost the ■ fan name ■ when came along there Okay, shouts, I use it enough picture. You are■■ pineapple. ZANG EN MUZIEK The world of Israel Be fed forever then From him to him eternally

[40:39] Amen Amen Amen The grace of Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Amen

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host