

“Face to Face”
 Pastor Sam Richards
 Sermon for 30 March 2025
 Text: 2 Cor. 10:3-14

What a state this world is in. Picture, if you will, a pack of wolves pursuing a herd of deer. We are the prey that the wolves (all forms of evil) seek to kill, destroy and devour and this pack of wolves is a cluster of demons: pornography and perversion (sensuality and corrupt desires) lead the pack (there are other wolf packs in other places, on/in other evil days—this evil day is ours. This depravity is ours to reckon with.), violence is in second place, murder in third and hatred is in fourth place. If one of us breaks formation, or appears to be weak, worn or vulnerable, the pack may just veer off, and pursue the isolated one so as to run it down. Spiritual warfare can be likened to a hunt . . . or likened to a clash of armies, the Lord’s army/the church versus Satan’s horde/the world. It’s a war of attrition but assaults, advances and retreats are all pertinent—it is a spiritual warfare and our weapons are spiritual weapons. Because of this warlike environment, Paul alludes to matters in militaristic terms—as if we are soldiers.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh [we are not carrying on our campaign], **4 for the weapons of our warfare** [against sin, idolatry and all forms of evil—including sensuality and corrupt desires] **are not of the flesh, but [a]divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.**

The Christian looks for his conquests only by the force and the power of truth, and by the agency of the Spirit of God. (Barnes Notes) Our warfare is against Satan. A minister of the Gospel, who is called forth to meet the adversary in the gate; to stand in the hottest place of the battle, and sustain the whole fire and artillery of the enemy; to fight the good fight of faith, endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ, and with the weapons he is furnished with to war, a good warfare, (Gill’s Exposition)

5 We are destroying speculations (casting down imaginations) **and every lofty thing** (rock fortress?) **raised up** (like the thoughts of men) **against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of** (better, to Christ!) **Christ, 6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience** (excommunication), **whenever your obedience is complete.**

Paul begins chapter 10 by invoking **the meekness and gentleness of Christ** (v.1) which is “strength under control” “ Then the metaphor as it were catches fire, and in our text he expands the figure of a warfare and sets before us the destruction of fortresses, the capture of their garrisons, and the leading of them away into another land, the stern punishment of the rebels who still hold out, and the merciful delay in administering it.” (Maclaren) We carry away the whole understanding (captive).

“Yet it must be remembered that he regarded the message which he preached as directly revealed to himself, and not derived from tradition or interpretation, and hence as possessed of a certainty to which the demonstrations of philosophy, however cogent, could not attain. (Meyer’s Commentary)

7 [b]You are looking at [c]things as they are outwardly.

2 Corinthians 10:7. *Do ye look on the outward appearance of things* — Judging of me by my outward person, and the infirmities of my body, (2 Corinthians 10:1-2,) and not from the power of Christ resting on me, and working by me? (Benson) Are ye so weak as to judge of persons and things merely from their faces, pretenses, or outward appearances? And to magnify these false apostles and teachers, merely because they set forth and magnify themselves, or because they take up a great breadth in the world, and live in a little state and splendour? If any of them do judge that he is the servant or the minister of Christ, why should he not think the same of me? What hath he to say to prove his relation to Christ more than I have? What hath he to glory in upon that account more than I have? (Poole's Commentary)

If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.

In answer to that claim, with a half-ironical emphasis on "let him *think*," or "let him *reckon*" (comp. 2Corinthians 10:2; 2Corinthians 10:5), he asserts that he is as truly His—*i.e.*, connected with Him, chosen by Him—as they were. Four reasons: 1. He was founder of that church; 2. He refused their support for their benefit; his life was proof enough of his sincerity and 3. His revelations were proof enough of his inspiration.

8 For even if I boast somewhat [d]further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame,

I should not be ashamed - It would be founded on good evidence and sustained by the nature of my commission. I should also have no occasion to be ashamed of the manner in which it has been exercised - a power that has in fact been employed in extending religion and edifying the church, [A constructive use of apostolic authority and not destructive—consigning you to Satan.] in originating and sustaining measures suited to destroy the soul. (Barnes' notes)

9 [e]for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. 10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his [f]personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." 11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present.

12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with [g]some of those who commend themselves [i.e.our boastful opponents—who foolishly compare themselves to others, ignoring that spiritual authority comes from God alone]; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. 13 But we will not boast beyond our measure, but [h]within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.[Nor do we establish ourselves by comparing our strengths with their weaknesses!] 14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ¹; Nothing alters the fact

¹ Footnotes

- a. 2 Corinthians 10:4 Or *mighty before God*
- b. 2 Corinthians 10:7 Or *Look at...* or *Do you look at...*?
- c. 2 Corinthians 10:7 Lit *what is before your face*

that we were the originators, and you, who came along later, can never take away our primacy in that regard.

This Wednesday I received word that a thirty-three year old woman/a friend has been assaulted, raped, brutally beaten and severely injured . . . if not brain dead (worse case scenario). This heartbreaking news, is horrendous in fact. And it is emotionally very disruptive.

She was formerly part of the women's church group in KVCC and this news was grieving and we shall grieve and miss her. However she was only one case of such abuse in the microcosm of my world! I cited the words of Hermia from "A Midsummer Night's Dream:" "Can you do more harm than hate me?"

Furthermore, perhaps you will recall my sharing that **the enmity God placed between the seed of the serpent and the seed of woman** (Gen. 3:15) is a key verse, one which motivates my jail ministry and informs my Christian/biblical world view. ***It is a stark, role defining truth.*** If all women, after Eve, are under Satanic attack, being chased by the wolves—which evidently they are—then the role of men, and particularly the role of husbands towards their wives as protector and defender comes into stark relief—and demand. When this physical/violent crime against women is exposed, real men do not need much prodding to step up and assume their biblical roles. I can testify that when I present this gender enmity plainly to men in jail—many of whom have perpetuated violence against women themselves—there typically follows some silence and then someone will step up and ask, "Where do I sign up? I want to be a man like that." That is very enheartening.

Pornography and perversion demean, objectify and sexualize women, desensitizing/grooming children.

Violence: domestic abuse, brawling, physical and sexual assault (rape, incest), ritual, cutting, mutilation and trafficking.

Murder: revenge, honor killing, sacrifice, abortion

Hatred: contempt, disparagement, dishonor, shaming

If women aren't fearful (sexual violence being one of their worst nightmare), and if menfolk aren't alarmed (offended and affronted by these assaults on women—and, as noted above, stirred to action!—we have a very great need for spiritual revival. We need the consequential Easter we have as recorded in Scripture.

So what does that consequential Easter look like? May I remind you that Jesus was stripped, assaulted, beaten—he was humiliated by nakedness and by mockery/derision/ridicule and public shaming. He looks like abused women, like disease-

d. [2 Corinthians 10:8](#) Or *more abundantly*

e. [2 Corinthians 10:9](#) Lit *so that I may not seem*

f. [2 Corinthians 10:10](#) Lit *bodily presence is weak*

g. [2 Corinthians 10:12](#) Or *any*

h. [2 Corinthians 10:13](#) Lit *according to the measure*

ridden children used up and tossed away. It looks like a billion dollar porn enterprise coupled with sex workers. It looks like an adulterous generation, materialistic to the core, drug addicted (both pharmaceutical/therapeutical and recreational street and designer drugs) and temporal in orientation. In our particular case of the “hate-driven violence” that has, nearly taken the life of one friend and threatened the well-being, security and safety of another friend (who has no criminal history) and has further, equally affected the life of a third woman—three instances within one week in my tiny world!—that is cause for alarm.

Violent sexual assault, of the same sort that marked the October 7th attacks by Hamas on an Israeli settlement/*kibbutz*? has come home to roost in our county. An insane degree of hatred informs our educational systems, our political life and governmental policies—all reversible!—and it is demonic. It needs to be reversed by prayer, by gospel preaching, by widespread repudiation as hearts of stone are replaced by hearts of flesh. And the resurrection power of Jesus, the same power that raised him from the dead, the power released by Easter faith, is capable of delivering us from evil, from murder, violence and hatred and even from pornography. The impure can be purified, the defiled can be cleansed, the damned can be saved if only people could be persuaded to turn to the living Lord who rose in triumph from the dead.

Now, besides all this, we have taken action. We have prayed that the demonic powers behind sexual violence and pornography be expelled.

That’s good, but prayer alone is, apparently not enough! We must take and hold ground! We must keep praying for the removal of this scourge. And while better laws, and law enforcement are helpful/necessary, the most important thing to do is to bring more people into the faith. Yes, we need a clear picture of what we are up against, and a clear picture of how the gospel impacts those four wolves of evil (pornography/perversion taken out by holiness, violence countered by love and peace, murder by a love of life, freedom, and hatred by humility, repentance and love itself). Love is not the only thing we need . . . we need the living Lord.

Amen.