

## Using Spiritual Weapons with Hope to Battle Injustice

Dear Friends,

You may have lost everything, but you can start all over if you do not lose hope. We are told in *Is. 43:18, 19*, “*Forget what happened! Don’t think about the past. I am creating something new. There it is! Do you see it? I have put roads in deserts, streams in thirsty lands.*”

So many are now depressed because the pain of the past and the unmet expectations of the present have removed all real hope for the future. As a result, all they can think about is how are they going to escape the present situation they are in which appears hopeless with no real future. The problem in just leaving our present circumstances provides no real solution. The key is learning how to live with hope.

When I am feeling over-whelmed with the hurt, pain, injustices and hopelessness of life, I know from experience that when I call out unto the Lord, He will answer. It is like a literal fulfillment of *Is. 43:20, 21* where God says, “*I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise*”.

The person who has learned to live with hope is the person who is living in the conscious presence of God. In the awareness of God’s eternal presence, we are awakened to His love. This love is demonstrated not only through the wonders of creation, but also through the reality proclaimed in the Scriptures. There we see that God has sent His son, the resurrected Christ, who plows daily through our hopeless circumstances, planting seeds of love both now and for all eternity.

Jesus’ proclamation of a revolution of compassion involves that *great spiritual weapon of love (I Corinthians 13)*. This love is good news to the poor. It is backed up by over 500 verses in the Bible concerning wealth and poverty. In Luke, one out of every seven verses, and in James, one out of every five verses, relate to this subject. In spite of the fact that Jesus talked more about poverty and wealth than any other subject, it is still not stressed in most pulpits on a regular basis. Instead, the gospel message is frequently exchanged for the popular cultural emphasis that money is a sign of success. That’s bad news for the poor, particularly when it is made to sound like money is a sign of God’s blessing.

It is the power and love of God working through us that causes the revolution of compassion to burst forth. This revolution of compassion in turn brings forth the change for good that the earth is thirsting for. It is not a revolution of theory or word, but direct action that results in helping those in need.

The question is where is the cry for social justice from those who claim to be followers of the One who declared in *Matthew 25:40* “*...inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, even so you did it unto me.*”

The political economics have intensified the inequality and pain for the poor with the unprecedented growth of wealth among the upper-bracket. It doesn’t matter whether it is Democrat or Republican, their golden rule remains the same “he who has got the gold makes the rules.” As a result, their rich political donors get the gold mines while the poor and struggling middle class get the shaft.

The question is how much longer are God-fearing people going to allow Jesus to be crucified on the cross of gold?

We must begin to have hope and use our spiritual weapon of love to take back our communities inch by inch. Compassionate people must arise and retake the reins of government from those who have sold their souls to the rich devils for whom Jesus said, “*...it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for one of these rich people to get in the Kingdom of God.*”

The time for change is now. As Christians we can't stand by and let government policies kill more and more people, whether it is those on death row or those on the streets who are homeless. It is time to see that in spite of their rhetoric the policies of these rich politicians are not about compassion, but about greed.

We must return to a politics of meaning where the individual is cherished, not used. We need a politics which recognizes that people are not cogs in a commercialistic machine, but are individuals created in the image of God. Such a politics of meaning will reconstruct our state in a way that gives value to each and every human being. It will recognize that *"The Lord maintains justice for the poor," (Psalm 140:12)* that *"God exalts the poor and needy" (1 Samuel 2:8)* and He *"lifts the poor from the dust."* (Psalm 113:7) When everyone recognizes this, then we begin to see that no state is stronger than its weakest member.

The time for action is now. *"And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off?" (Luke 18:7)* As we encounter injustice, we must never forget the importance of earnest prayer. We should never underestimate the power of crying out to God day and night concerning the injustice we are aware of.

In *1 Corinthians 13* we see that the greatest God can give us is the gift of love. Along with this gift of love comes the gift of holy boldness, which is so essential if we are going to take a courageous stand for justice. In *II Tim. 1:6,7* we read, *"for this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a Spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power, of love and self-discipline"*.

As we let the power of the Holy Spirit, our Helper, work in us we will see the fruit of the Spirit springing forth. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23).*

With the Helper, and the fruits of Spirit flowing through us, we are awakened to the fact that we are no longer losers, just struggling to make it through each day. We are more than conquerors because of the Helper's resources available to us through Jesus. *"How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).*

What does the Scripture say that God desires of His people? *"To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man, who is of the earth, may not terrify them anymore." (Ps. 10:18)* *"Learn to do right! Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Is. 1:17)* As you read these words you need to ask yourself what you believe needs to be done to stop the oppressor by using the spiritual gift which is love? How do we respond in love to the ongoing misuse of eminent domain, which takes the homes of the poor and elderly in order that rich developers may make more money? What do we do about the control of big utility and oil companies, whose ever increasing rates not only cause the poor and elderly to become slaves, but also continue to pollute the environment with their use of fossil fuels?

Then there is the issue of justice for the homeless about which *Jeremiah 22:3* says *"Thus says the Lord: Execute justice and righteousness, and deliver out of the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong; do no violence to the stranger (homeless) or temporary resident, the fatherless, or the widowed, nor shed innocent blood in this place."*

In spite of the crime, the corruption and the injustice, because Christ is risen, we have hope. This reality is demonstrated through every seed that is planted and then resurrected into a wonderful plant. The Creator of all commands through His creation and the power of His word, *"So do not fear; for I am you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Is. 41:10).* The fact that God upholds us with His righteousness right hand tells us we do not need to be afraid of life. Present circumstances cannot suffocate our hope for a future, for the resurrected Christ has provided a hope for a future both now and for all eternity.

Even though we know that the death of Jesus Christ has provided the solution for sin and His resurrected body opened the door to an eternal future for us in the presence of God, we still live in a very troubled world. That troubled world also invades regularly our inner world, robbing us of the reality that we can live with hope. Paul reawakens us to the future that hope provides in the midst of our present circumstances when he declared, *“We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.”* (Romans 5:2-5)

If we have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our life, then we need to learn to live with the hope He has provided for us. This hope frees us to love and be loved. For without the free flow of such love we will find ourselves becoming increasingly angry with each passing day.

Being on the front lines in behalf of those in need, as advocates for justice, does not mean that we have to become bitter, angry people. The Bible tells us to be angry but sin not. This means we can battle injustice with spiritual weapons knowing that God is in control. This knowledge keeps us from becoming bitter insecure people, for we are anchored in God’s love. *“He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are law and justice. A God of faithfulness without breach or deviation, just and right is He.”* (Dt.32:4)

Jesus has called each of us to be “salt” and “light” in our community. If the people of God remain silent in the light of injustice the result is, *“justice is turned away backward, and righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God) stands far off; for truth has fallen in the street and uprightness cannot enter (the courts of justice) Is. 59:14”. “They have grown fat and sleek. Yes, they surpass in deeds of wickedness; they do not judge and plead with justice the cause of the fatherless, that they may prosper, and they do not defend the rights of the needy.”* (Jer.5:28)

God has created enough for all. With that in mind, we see that there is no real energy crises, food shortage or water problem. The problem is a greed problem that can and will be overcome as each one lets Jesus battle injustice with the spiritual weapons He has given them. As this happens, we will *“let justice run like waters and righteousness as a mighty and ever-flowing stream”* (Amos 5:24).

It is by faith and the use of the spiritual weapons God has given us that justice will flow forth. *“Who by faith subdued kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promised blessings, closed the mouths of lion.”* (Heb.11:33) Let us speak the truth in love, closing the mouths of the lions and allowing justice to be administered.

We must remain faithful in our service to our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ during this trying hour. Remember, *“He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.”* (Psalms 37:6) *“The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.”* (Proverbs 29:7)

I believe people grow old not because of the hardening of the arteries, but because of a hardening of the heart. Time and hopelessness wear us down as we travel through this vale of tears. Yet I have learned that with hope burning within, I have a refuge which keeps the heart of love from hardening. *“We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”* (2 Cor.4: 16 NIV) The Message Bible expresses this verse in the following fashion: *“We’re not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without His unfolding grace.”*

Jesus has already given to us as believer’s authority over all demonic powers. In *Luke 10:19* He says, *“Behold, I give you the authority (and power) to trample over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”*

Fighting the good fight is as the Lord told Zechariah in *Zechariah 4:6*, *“Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord Almighty.”* I have found that as a soldier in the Army of the Lord that I must receive the Power of

the Holy Spirit as Satan tries to defeat me with depression, anxiety, and frustration and at times even hopelessness. I must always remember God has equipped me for spiritual warfare and that victory is not through my own might or power but by the Spirit of God.

*Revelations 12:10, 11 says, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and word of their testimony."*

We are equipped for spiritual warfare as a result of the death of Jesus Christ (the shedding of His blood) and power of His resurrection. The word of our testimony is the personal application of this "blood of the Lamb" to the "door post" of our hearts.

With this power we come to the realization, *"Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds"* (2 Corinthians 10:3, 4).

We are equipped with spiritual weapons that have the divine power to demolish strongholds. They include the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God, the power of the Holy Spirit and the resurrected Christ, and the word of our testimony.

Never forget that as believers, we are equipped for warfare. *"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God"* (1 John 5:4, 5).

In the Scriptures, promise after promise is given to those who battle injustice. In spite of the promise of victory found in the Bible, it is so easy to get tired out, worn out and burned out as we battle the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. That is why it is so critical that we keep our daily appointments with God.

In those daily appointments we talk to God in prayer, reading and meditating on the Scriptures under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit and beholding the wonders of God's creation. *"For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous – those who are upright and in right standing with God – and His ears are attentive (open) to their prayer..."* (1 Peter 3:12).

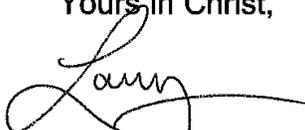
Never forget that as you battle injustice with the spiritual weapons God has given you, you are equipped for victory. For *"Greater is He (Christ Jesus) who is in you than he (Satan) who is in the world"* (1 John 4:4).

Now believe God's word and move forth by faith, *"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ"* (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

We must make the most of the days we have left. Moses wrote, *"Teach us to number our days"* (Ps. 90:12). We all have a purpose for living. As we live out that purpose in service unto God we are able to make each day a Masterpiece that will survive for all eternity.

Never forget that the choices you make today will directly impact your tomorrows. Live each day fully for the glory of God. Share in both word and deed with everyone you meet that there is hope because Christ is risen. Reject sin and let the Word and Spirit of God fill you to the extent that this day you will become His Masterpiece, glorifying God both now and for all eternity. As you do this be sure to use the spiritual weapons of faith and love to that God has given you.

Yours in Christ,



Larry Rice