



Unit 1: Withholding Nothing
Sermon Series Title: The Lordship of Christ
Sermon 2: The Battle for Your Beliefs
Bible Passage: 2 Corinthians 10:1-6

Background/Context

I wear eyeglasses. Every year, I return to my eye doctor to be sure that my glasses are exactly right to correct my vision. The smallest change in the shape of the lens will change the way I see everything. If I want to see my world clearly and correctly, the shape of my glasses is crucial.

Your beliefs are the lens through which you see God, others, and yourself. If your beliefs are warped, then all your life experiences will be distorted. Beliefs that are shaped by the lordship of Jesus Christ will empower you to trust God, love others, and understand the part you are to play in God's saving work.

The first nine chapters of 2 Corinthians were written by Paul as a loving pastor caring for God's people. Beginning at chapter 10, Paul's letter becomes a call to arms, a warning to prepare for a fierce battle. Using military terms and stressing the urgency of the moment, Paul called the Corinthians to fight and win the battle for true beliefs. He called his readers, then and now, to subject every belief to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

A. Your Beliefs Are a Battlefield (2 Cor. 10:3)

We live in a world of competing and conflicting ideas. Religions which once seemed to be practiced half a world away may now be just down the street. Self-help books offer a framework of ideas they claim will help readers overcome any problem. By wanting to feel more welcoming to new people, some churches have cut themselves off from a denominational heritage of faith and have begun practicing their own interpretations of Christianity. Many Christians don't know what they believe or why they believe it.

Paul saw competing beliefs in the church at Corinth and announced that he would "wage war" (v. 3) to expose the error of wrong beliefs and affirm the truth. The fight would be intense and costly. His foes were formidable. Still, Paul knew that the truth was worth the fight.

Christians today must engage in the battle for true beliefs. With respect for the religious freedom of all people, we cannot passively accept any and every idea as Christian truth. We must "contend for the faith" (Jude 1:3) as we deal with others and as we examine our own hearts.

Application Point: Have you enlisted in the battle for true beliefs? When was the last time you studied an idea to see if that idea is consistent with your Christian faith? What tools would you use to examine a belief to see if it is true?

B. Your Beliefs Are the Center of Your Life (2 Cor. 10:4)

The battle for beliefs may sound to you like an academic argument among theologians and pastors, but the value of true beliefs is as close to you as your own heart and as important as the quality of your life.

Paul emphasized that the weapons he used in the battle for true beliefs were powerful enough for the “demolition of strongholds.” In Paul’s day, a city was surrounded by a fortified wall to repel enemies, but the wall was not the last line of defense. Inside the city was a “stronghold,” a fortified tower inside which the leaders and the treasure of the city could be defended. An army’s victory was complete only when the stronghold was conquered.

The battle of beliefs is not over until you conquer the “stronghold” of your own heart. The issue is not just what beliefs exist in your denomination or your church, but the beliefs that shape your view of God, others, and yourself. You can surround yourself with orthodox doctrine but live a defeated Christian life because you haven’t made the beliefs written upon your heart subject to the truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The fiercest battle of beliefs must be fought and won inside you.

Application Point: What beliefs rule your heart? Do you experience God as a loving Heavenly Father or an angry judge? Have you experienced saving grace or do you struggle to somehow “earn” your salvation? Do you welcome others into your life as opportunities to love and be loved, or do you see them as problems to be avoided?

C. You Win the Battle by Making Your Beliefs Obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)

Is the battle of beliefs nothing more than a war of differing opinions? How can we know that our beliefs are true? Paul said that we discover the truth by taking “every thought captive to obey Christ.” We test every belief by the life, ministry, and message of Jesus. When our beliefs differ from His Word, we need to change our beliefs to conform to His truth.

A ship in heavy fog saw a light ahead. As the ship moved forward and the light grew closer, the captain sent out a radio message demanding that the other vessel change its course. The reply came, “This is a lighthouse. I suggest that you change your course.” Jesus is the lighthouse. He will not change. When we see the light of His truth, we must acknowledge His authority and adjust our beliefs and our behavior. Only then can we experience victory in the battle for beliefs.

Application Point: Are you becoming more like Jesus, or are you trying to make Him more like you? Read the Gospel of Mark this week. As you read, write down words and actions of Jesus that seem different from the way you think and live. Then, ask yourself, “How do I need to change my ideas and my actions to live for Jesus as Lord?”