

"WATCH, STAND FAST IN THE FAITH"

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 16:13,14**. From Roy H. Enoch (12-19-1993).
- B. These verses seem to bring the doctrinal instruction of the book to a close. The remaining verses deal with personal greetings and instructions to individuals.
- C. Each of these commands sum up a major focus of the epistle.
- D. Each of these commands are often in a military context:
 - 1. Standing watch or being a watchman is a common figure for men of God.
 - 2. Standing fast or holding their ground was also a common military principle, and never more important than the "good fight of faith."
 - 3. Courage and endurance are major requirements for service, as the KJV words it, "quit you like men."
 - 4. Be strong or develop strength is necessary for the arduous tasks of a soldier.
 - 5. Perhaps there is a contrast provided here of the spiritual warfare which is done in love rather than hate and bitterness.
- E. God's service is often described as warfare.
 - 1. Jesus is the "captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10).
 - 2. We are to put on the "whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:10-17).
 - 3. Paul says that we are to put on this armor of God, because "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, ..."

I. THE XIAN SOLDIER IS TO WATCH FOR DANGERS AS WELL AS FOR OPPORTUNITIES.

- A. Many of God's prophets were watchmen for God's people (Ezek. 3:17-21).
Elders are watchmen over God's flock (Ac. 20:28-31).
- B. Each Xian must watch his conduct because we do not know when the Lord will return, or we will die.
See Mt. 24:42-44; Jas. 4:14.
- C. Watch, lest we fall into temptation, as did the apostles in Gethsemane (Lk. 22:40).
- D. We need to continually watch our lives (2Cor. 13:5).
- E. We must watch out for false doctrine (1Jn. 4:1).
- F. We should watch for opportunities to serve others.

II. WE MUST "STAND FAST IN THE FAITH."

- A. A soldier must be dependable in carrying out his responsibilities.
 - 1. Soldiers who go A.W.O.L. are disgraced and counted traitors.
 - 2. They lose all benefits and honors that they might have received.
- B. A Xian who leaves the doctrine of X, leaves God (2Jn. 9).
 - 1. Jesus is the True Vine and as branches, we must remain in Him (Jn. 15:6).
 - 2. If we teach anything different from what the apostles taught we are eternally cut off from God's blessings (Gal. 1:7,8).
- C. A lack of steadfastness causes many spiritual problems:
 - 1. It hinders or stops spiritual growth.
 - 2. It destroys our usefulness in God's kingdom.
 - 3. We lose our salvation.
 - 4. We become a stumbling block to others.
 - 5. We become an offense to X.
 - 6. It spoils our spiritual joy in this life.

III. "QUIT YOU LIKE MEN. . ." OR "BE BRAVE."

- A. Soldiers are to be mature and responsible.

1. Warfare is no place for children. Children are unstable and vulnerable (Eph. 4:13-15).
 2. Xians must mature for service (Heb. 5:12-14).
- B. Courage and bravery are greatly admired.
1. It requires a commitment to a cause greater than ourselves.
 2. If we do not love X more than others and even ourselves we cannot be His disciples.

IV. "BE STRONG."

- A. We are commanded to develop strength.
1. It requires both proper nourishment and exercise (Heb. 5:14).
 - a. The food is from God's word (1Pet. 2:1,2).
 - b. The exercise is from doing what the Lord commands.
 2. The Lord commands us to be strong because He offers us the strength that we need.
 - a. We cannot be strong of ourselves (2Cor. 12:9,10).
 - b. Our strength must be in the Lord (Eph. 6:10).
- B. There are several things that we can do to develop this strength.
1. Continue faithfully in prayer.
 2. Work diligently, using all our strength to gain more.
 3. Avoid evil influences that weaken.
 4. Seek the knowledge and understanding of God will.

V. "LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE WITH LOVE."

- A. Physical warfare is often w/hate and bitterness.
1. Hate and personal vengeance are often motivation.
 2. Injury and destruction are the goals.
- B. Spiritual warfare is to be done w/love.
1. Our model is X, who taught us to love our enemies.
 - a. The love is described as treating them right (Mt. 5:44).
 - b. He prayed for those who crucified Him (Lk. 23:34).
 2. "Love" is defined as action rather than a feeling (1Jn. 5:3).
 3. The extent to that love is also described (Jn. 15:10-12).
- C. Therefore we must, w/love, **watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, and be strong.**