
ONE - Study of Ephesians

Part 9 - Battle Ready

We have enemies... Ephesians 6:11-12

The enemy of God, Satan, wars against the foundation, structure and very nature of God. The sin that corrupted Lucifer – self generated pride, was what led to him being cast out of heaven, removed from God's heavenly government and his previous place of authority, thrown down to earth. (Ezekiel 28:12-18; Isaiah 14:12; Luke 10:18)

As a result of this heinous sin, his pride against God, Lucifer became corrupt, and his name changed from Lucifer ("morning star") to Satan ("adversary"). His power became completely perverted (Isaiah 14:12,16,17). His destiny, following the second coming of Christ, is to be bound in a pit during the 1000-year millennial kingdom over which Christ will rule (Revelation 20:3) and eventually will be thrown into the lake of fire. (Matthew 25:41)

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."

Screwtape Letters – C.S. Lewis

The war we fight, empowered by Holy Spirit when we are found IN Christ Jesus, is to reclaim the ground the enemy has taken on earth, in the attempt to steal kill and destroy as many lives, entrapping them in his fortress of lies, and in a desperate vindictive attempt to entomb them in darkness for eternity.

God made Satan... God is the creator – Satan part of creation. Who will you choose to believe?

We are in a battle... Ephesians 6:10-18

- + The battle rages in the heavenly realm.
- + Although we are assured of victory, we must engage in the struggle until Christ returns
- + YOU (Greek) = plural (not individual)
- + We fight in the strength of the Church, whose power comes from the Holy Spirit.

We have orders 'Be strong and stand'... Ephesians 6:10-11,13-14

What are we to stand against?

- + **False ideologies** –The rejection of the word and the authority of God in Genesis 3 resulted in a rejection of God that resulted in an increasing ignorance about Him and a substitution of human ideas about 'god' in the place of accurate knowledge about Him. Stand against the false religions and human ideologies that entrap then entomb people. (Romans 1:18-32)
- + **Ignorance and Apathy** –We need to ensure that we are not unaware of Satan's schemes. (2 Corinthians 2:11)
- + **Individualism and Pride** – Jesus said in Matthew 5:16 'In the same way, let your (plural) light shine before others, so that they may see your (plural) good works and give glory to your (plural) Father in heaven'. Individualistic interpretation of our mission as believers, lose sight of the centrality of the Church (Ephesians 3:7-10). Paul explains that it is the responsibility of the whole church working together to see the growth, maturity and effectiveness of its members (Ephesians 4:12-16). Fighting alone in spiritual warfare can also make you more susceptible to sin. The enemy will play to our pride. Where we feel we are strongest or will never slip up is the area he will go at us to ensure it undermines our faith and gives a foothold for him to hold condemnation over us.
- + **Fear** – The enemy is good at bluffing, but we have the victory in Christ Jesus. Do not give a place to fear. Instead stand in the truth of who God is and who you are in Christ. (Isaiah 41:10; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Timothy 1:18-19; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; 1 John 4:4)

How do we ensure we stand firm?

- + **Fix our eyes on Jesus.** It is only Christ in us who can stand against the enemy. (Hebrews 12:2)
- + **Walk in Holiness.** You won't be prepared or equipped to face spiritual warfare or able to stand firm if you're already standing in a place of weakness. We pursue holiness because sin never delivers on its promise. Take care not to lose your stability, not to return to slavery, and through holy lives stand firm. (2 Peter 1:3-9; 2 Peter 2:17-19; 2 Peter 3:11-13)
- + **God has given us authority so we need not be afraid.** Spiritual warfare is the enemy trying to take authority over you. Surrendering to God verbally is a powerful step in standing against this false authority. It is with the word of our testimony that we overcome. (Romans 8:26-27; Philippians 4:1,13; 1 John 4:4)

We are to be geared up and battle ready... Ephesians 6:14-17

“By armour is meant Christ.” William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*.

Christ is the truth (John 14:6); Christ is the righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30); Christ is our peace (Ephesians 2:14); Christ is our salvation (Luke 2:30). We need to put on Christ and clothe ourselves in Him (Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27).

Put on and use every piece of God’s armour to resist the devil’s attacks and when the evil day comes, to stand.

- + **Belt of Truth** – The belt that enabled the soldier to carry all their needed equipment in combat conditions. The Belt of Truth protects believers from the lies of Satan. (Ephesians 6:14)

- + **Breastplate of Righteousness** – The breastplate of righteousness was a protective ‘second skin’ designed to protect the vital organs in the torso of the soldier. (Ephesians 6:14)

- + **Readiness to spread the Good News** – The shoes ‘Caligae’ (Latin) are heavy-soled spiked military sandal-boots known for being issued to Roman legionary soldiers throughout the Roman Republic and Empire – to prevent injury, keep feet healthy and as a function of weaponry. The shoes of peace, for the believer, are a solid foundation of trust in God and allow us to stand and to advance. (Ephesians 6:15)

- + **Shield of Faith** – The shield was covered in metal and thick leather to block incoming projectiles. The shield of faith is the key to all spiritual armour. Faith shields us from the fiery darts of Satan. (Ephesians 6:16)

- + **Helmet of Salvation** – As the main form of protection for the soldier’s head, a priority target by the enemy. The helmet of salvation protects the believers mind from Satan’s attacks. (Ephesians 6:17)

- + **Sword, the Word of God** – The sword was the soldier’s precision-orientated offensive weapon designed for close hand to hand combat. The sword of the Spirit is the Rhema Word of God, our only offensive weapon. (Ephesians 6:17)

We must stay fearlessly alert... Ephesians 6:18-20

Just as Paul had directed the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 16:13 to be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous and strong – here again to the Ephesians he urges them ‘to pray in the Spirit on ALL occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests, and to BE ALERT and always keep on praying for God’s people.

And what to pray about... not that the chains he found himself in as he wrote to them, would be removed (which would be fair enough) but rather that he would go on, undiscouraged, undefeated, and that he would continue to find the ability to speak fearlessly for Christ in spite of them – to use him in any circumstance right where he was in the midst of this difficult time’.

Application

1. Discuss how the truth that God is the creator and Satan is a created being impact your understanding of this spiritual war that we are in?
2. What are the dangers Paul is highlighting in Ephesians 6:10-13, of underestimating or overestimating the enemy?
3. Why does Paul in this passage, emphasise the idea to stand, withstand, take a stand?
4. Discuss the idea that the Spiritual Armour is ‘standard issue’ at the moment of salvation, to every believer for their life of active duty. Why is Paul emphasising that this armour is not for us to produce or reproduce, rather to receive and choose to put on?
5. Discuss which of the six elements of Spiritual Armour you still have questions about?
6. Consider Ephesians 6:10-20, Matthew 28:18-20 and Exodus 33:53. Are we, the Church, too content protecting what we have, instead of moving where we ought to be?