

The Christian Arsenal

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EPHESIANS 6:10-13

Last week we got through **verse 4 of chapter 6**. I just want to summarize the next few verses. **Verses 5-9** deal with slaves and masters...and we can apply this teaching to employees and employers. Paul tells us that we should serve our employers as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he also tells us that employers should do the same.

Paul has spoken to the relationship between husband and wife, and between children and parents and between employee and employer. And the bottom line of this teaching is simply this.

Submission and leadership are definitely taught in the Word of God. Wives are to submit to their husbands and husbands are to love their wives. Children are to submit to their parents and parents are to bring their children up in a godly way. And employees are to serve their employers as they serve the Lord and employers are to understand that they are to do the same.

And this cannot be done apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit that Paul talked about back in **verse 18 of chapter 5**. Being filled with the Spirit is absolutely essential or we will do things our own way!

And Paul is going to teach us today that something else is absolutely essential. The majority of **chapter 6** deals with spiritual warfare. Paul lays out for the believers at Ephesus specific pieces of armor. But, before we see the armor, which we'll see next week, I believe we need to know and recognize our enemy.

When America was attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. The enemy was obvious. We knew **who** they were and we knew **where** they were.

On September 11 of last year, America was attacked again, but this time we weren't attacked by another country. We were attacked by individuals.

So, instead of declaring war on another **nation**, President Bush declared war on a **concept**. He declared war on terrorism. He declared war on evil. And as we've all seen on television this war has employed several different types of weapons.

Diplomatic strategies have been used to build a coalition of allies.

Financial tools have been used to freeze and dry up the resources of the terrorists.

Trade embargoes and other strategies are being employed in an effort to isolate nations who don't join in this effort to combat terrorism.

And of course,
much **military might** is being used.

All of this is being done to bring to justice those individuals who are responsible for sending terrorists to kill thousands of innocent Americans and to keep this from happening again.

Modern wars demand modern strategies...and interestingly, the modern multi-faceted approach to warfare is not new...we will see next week that spiritual warfare between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light must use a similar approach.

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First of all, however, today I want us to identify our enemy. I'll never forget President Bush addressing the joint session of Congress after September 11 and identifying the enemy of the United States. How many of us had ever heard of Al Qaeda before that night? Or the Taliban?

Ephesians 6:10-11...

First of all, Paul tells us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Any other strength is useless against our enemy.

The main thrust of the **Book of Ephesians** is this...

We as believers are in Christ and are one in Him.

His life is our life. His power is our power. His truth is our truth. His way is our way. And His strength is our strength.

The Lord's strength is always more than sufficient for the battle. And by the same token, our own strength is never enough!

Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Jesus told the church at Philadelphia, "I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power. You have kept My Word and you have not denied My name."

The Philadelphians had a little power. It's not the amount of the strength that's important...it's the Source!

Being strong in the Lord also has nothing to do with how long we've been saved. People who have been Christians a long time aren't always strong Christians. And new Christians aren't necessarily weak Christians.

I think it's really sad to see old Christians...I mean folks who have been believers for a long, long time and they've never learned to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

In reality, the believer's battles are already won. In His crucifixion and resurrection the Lord Jesus destroyed Satan and his power of sin and death. But, God is allowing Satan to still have power right.

I read this week that doctors at the Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Phoenix recently warned that rattlesnakes can still strike and kill even after they're dead.

Several patients enter the hospital each year suffering bites from rattlesnakes that have been shot and their heads cut off.

Apparently, the snake's mouth retains a reflex action and can still make striking-type motions for up to an hour after decapitation.

Satan, "that old serpent," was defeated at Calvary and his head, as it were, was cut off. But for a little while he can still strike, and he constantly seeks to attack us in our attempts to walk with God.

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The Bible teaches we are still in a warfare. And God in His wisdom and sovereignty is allowing the devil to come against us. He allowed him to come against the Lord Jesus...are we better than our Master?

But having said that...let me also say that though the battle is waged day after day, we have no reason to tremble in fear.

And that's what Paul sets out in this chapter to teach us. The **strength** is there...the **Lord** is there...the **power** of His might is there...the **armor** is there...**but you and I must learn to appropriate it!**

And we do that through means of prayer and knowledge of and obedience **to** the Word of God!!

Verse 11 tells us to put on the full armor of God.

The Greek phrase translated "**put on**" carries the idea of **once and for all**...it's the idea of **permanence**.

The full armor of God isn't something to be put on and then taken off...it's something to be put on permanently. It's not a uniform to wear only while we're playing a game and then when the game is over we take it off.

The armor of God is to be the Christian's lifelong companion.

Remember where Paul was when he wrote this...He was chained to a Roman soldier...He had been in the company of soldiers for years and he knew all about armor.

Roman armor was designed to protect the soldier's body.

Christian armor is designed to protect the believer's soul.

God doesn't throw us unprotected into the battle. God has provided us with all we need for complete protection of mind, soul, spirit, conscience and will. But it's **our** responsibility to put it on...piece by piece...

deliberately, thoughtfully, intelligently, and prayerfully.

Verse 11 also tells us this armor will enable us to stand against the "wiles" or "schemes" of the devil. This word carries with it the idea of "craftiness, cunning and deception."

Let me ask you...has the devil used any of his schemes against you this week? Have you been discouraged? Have you been disappointed? Have you been weary in well doing?

Well, the devil has many schemes to use against God's children. He makes us too busy. He sends temptations. He seeks a foothold in our hearts, habits and lives. He exploits an unforgiving spirit or a sharp tongue or a bitter attitude. He zeroes in on personal weaknesses.

But, I have good news! We don't have to fall under his spell. We can resist him! **James 4:7-8** tells us "**Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil**

and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Did you know that Satan doesn't waste much of his time with unbelievers? Why should he? They're already his children. They're already in his camp.

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He comes against God's children! He knows he can't have us. He knows we belong to the Father by the blood of the Son. But he also knows he can **disrupt our lives...he can rob us of our joy** and he can **ruin our witness**.

And he uses deception...he uses lies. Jesus called him "**the father of lies**". He stands before the Father accusing us to Him. He creates doubt. He can do a lot of damage. He is roaring lion and he goes about seeking whom he may devour...but we need to remember this...he does it under the permission and supervision of God!

Paul wants us to be prepared! He wants us to know what we're up against! And if Satan comes against you today in one area, and makes no headway, he'll come against you in another area tomorrow!

He'll use the world. He'll use you own sinful flesh. He'll even lull you into thinking he doesn't exist or that he's harmless. That's why we see pictures of Satan dressed up in a red suit with little horns and a forked tail...I mean, who pays attention to someone dressed up like Halloween?

Not only that, but he hides himself in religion, and art and music and in education and philosophy and psychology and intellectualism.

Remember when he came before God in **Job 2**? God asked him, "**From where do you come?**" What did Satan say? He said, "**...from going to and fro on the earth...**"

He roams the earth. He's constantly looking for ways to turn people from God. He's constantly looking for people to devour. He wants to devour your testimony. He wants to devour your influence for the Lord Jesus. He wants to find every advantage he can get in your life with his ultimate purpose being to devour everything that could be used for Christ's purposes.

His three-pronged attack is the **Christian, the home and the church!**

Verse 12...

The original Greek word means "**hand to hand combat.**" It pictures a man with a grip on another, pressing hard, straining every muscle to get the advantage and pin him to the ground.

Have you ever watched wrestling? I don't mean the fake stuff on TV. I mean real high school or college or Olympic wrestling. We went to the Olympics in Los Angeles in 1984 and got to watch Greco-Roman wrestling. I loved it! Each man was trying to get the upper hand on the other.

And Paul wants us to know that we're involved in a hand to hand battle...we're not mere spectators on on-lookers.

But Paul says, "**you don't struggle or wrestle against flesh and blood.**"

Our enemy is not the world we see...corrupt and wicked as it is...our enemy is the world we cannot see!

Our enemy is not people! We must see **beyond** people. Satan may use people to **persecute us** and **lie to us** and **cheat us** and **hurt us** or even **kill us**...but our real enemy lurks in the unseen world and as long as we see people as our enemy and wrestle against them, we will spend our strength in vain and the strength we have to struggle with Satan will be wasted.

We're told in God's Word that when Satan fell he took one-third of the angels with him. Satan cannot be everywhere at once, but his demons do his bidding.

[Paul listed four distinct Satanic orders against whom we wrestle in our spiritual warfare.](#)

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Let me tell you what Dr. John Phillips says about this:

“Hosts of spirit beings reside in the unseen world. We cannot see them unless they choose to be seen. In the beginning they were all good and glorious. They came from God’s hand, took their place around God’s throne, and sang His praises. There were ranks upon ranks of angels and arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim. At the head of them of all – the highest of all created intelligences, the supreme creature in the ranks of the angel throng – was Lucifer, son of the morning, the anointed cherub.

When Lucifer fell, the heavenly hosts divided. Many sons of light fell with Lucifer and were also cast out of Heaven. Satan is now their lord.”

And just as there are ranks in the good angels...there are ranks in the bad angels. At the head of Satan’s order are *principalities or rulers*. They are the **high-ranking governing authorities** who are under Satan’s control.

From **Daniel 10**, we know that Satan places spirit princes over various kingdoms of men on earth. The prince of Persia alone was powerful enough to hinder Gabriel and keep him from fulfilling his commission for three weeks.

Then Paul mentions *powers*...These demons possess authority given to them by Satan. Perhaps these demons gather information useful to Satan. Perhaps they influence events. More than likely they inflict woe and bondage on the human race, and laugh at man’s blindness in refusing to believe that such evil beings exist.

Next Paul mentions the *world forces of this darkness*. These are thought to be demons who have infiltrated various political systems of the world. They attempt to pattern these systems after Satan’s realm of darkness and don’t we see so much of that in this world today?

False philosophy, false religion, false teaching of every kind have crept into the political systems of so many countries.

Don’t you believe Islam is used strongly by Satan? They do his bidding in the name of Allah!

Then Paul mentions *spiritual wickedness or forces in high or heavenly places*.

The Greek word for wickedness means “decadence and depravity.” The perversion and pornography and permissiveness that abounds in our culture today were set in motion by Satan and his demons.

Paul’s purpose is not so much to explain the details of the demonic hierarchy as it is to give us some idea of its sophistication.

We are in a struggle...but we have already been given all we need to be victorious. Some people get so caught up in studying the devil and his demons that they forget to study the **rest** of God’s Word!!

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Verse 13...

We are simply to **put on and keep on** the armor God has made available to us.

We are to simply walk with God and be confident in the knowledge that “greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.”

We are simply to remember that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of the Lord Jesus Christ!

God gives no deferments. God gives no exemptions. God gives no furloughs! God’s people are at war and will continue to be until Christ returns and takes charge.

And He has told us to **put on our armor, resist and stand firm!**

When Martin Luther was accused of heresy and condemned for declaring that man is saved by faith alone in Christ alone, he said these words...

“My conscience is captive to the Word of God – here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.”

Every believer who is faithful to God’s Word cannot do otherwise than stand firm.

So many believers have quit standing firm. They used to come to Sunday School. They used to teach Sunday School. They used to lead folks to the Lord Jesus. They used to pastor a church or lead Bible studies. They used to minister to the sick...

But one day they turned their backs on God’s work and they disappeared from His service. Their reasons differ. Their circumstances differ. But the underlying reason is always the same...

They took off God’s armor. They lost their conviction and courage and power and desire to stand firm! Satan was free to shoot his fiery darts at their unprotected soul and spirit. They didn’t lose their salvation, but they lost their victory and their joy!

The greatest joys come in the greatest victories, and the greatest victories come from the greatest battles...when they are fought in the power of God’s might and with each piece of His armor in place!

Praise His holy name!