

## The Final Word

### Week 6 – Ephesians 6:10-24

“The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation” (2 Peter 2:9). Until we see the Lord face-to-face, we will be fighting the temptations of sin, Satan, and self. Praise God that “His divine nature has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through **the true knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 2:9 emphasis mine).

Satan is a powerful enemy, but remember we are not fighting for victory; we are fighting from victory. Through Christ, Satan has lost his authority over us. However, he didn't lose his power. John wrote, “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). He still dominates the world in many ways as “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) with intentions to kill, steal, and destroy.

#### I. The Adversary – Ephesians 6:10-17

Paul writes, “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). The devil is a schemer. Sneaky. Subtle. Seductive. Strong. Sinister. But defeated through Christ! Hallelujah!

It is extremely important that we know our enemy. And, of course, our enemy has always wanted to deceive us concerning himself. It has always been the purpose of our enemy to pull the veil of darkness across his kingdom, and his cleverest ruse is to make people believe that he does not exist at all (Adrian Rogers Sermon Archives “Spiritual Warfare, Part 1”).

Paul was to be “strong in the Lord” (our strength is derived from God) and in the strength of His might” (the mighty strength that God exhibited when He raised Christ from the dead). He tells us to “put on the full armor of God.” Even as he penned these words, the apostle was chained to a Roman soldier. Talk about a visual aid! The phrase “put on” carries the idea of permanence, once and for all. God's armor is not to be something we put on and off like an outer garment. Rather, it is to be our lifelong companion in order that we might stand firm. To “stand firm” is a military term meaning to hold a critical position while under attack. Stand “against the schemes of the devil.” The Greek word translated “wiles” is *methodia*. Our enemy is brilliantly wicked, cunningly cruel, and a ferocious liar. We could never stand against his evil schemes were it not for the Lord!

The evil one is a defeated foe, as Paul empathized in Colossians 2:15. We stand, in Christ, on the victory side of the cross. The evil one may rage and roar, but he is powerless before a child of God who is arrayed in the armor of God, filled with the Spirit of God, and strong in the power of His might (John Phillips, *Exploring Ephesians and Philippians*).

We are not locked in battle with flesh and blood. Satan is the adversary. He uses people, wittingly or unwittingly, to accomplish his purposes. The devil is lurking in the shadows, drawing us into verbal sparring matches or worse, as we weary ourselves fighting against the wrong enemy. He uses misdirection to his advantage to damage relationships, reputations, and God's clearly delineated roles.

Paul listed four distinct Satanic orders against whom we wrestle in our spiritual warfare: principalities, power, the rulers of this world's darkness, and wicked spirit in high places. 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 archangels, cherubim, and seraphim. At the head of them 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. He is given many impressive titles in the Bible; for although he is a fallen fiend, he is still powerful. Satan is called the god of this world, and the prince of the power of the air. It was he who deceived Eve and used her to bring about Adam's downfall. Satan was thus able to seize the kingdom of this world to ruin it and to rule it in defiance of the living God (John Phillips, *Exploring Ephesians and Philippians*).

Thinking of the wiles of the devil, I want to draw your attention to an Old Testament story to remind you of how sly our enemy is. Look at Exodus 8-10. We are breaking into the story of the plagues at about the midway point. The water had been turned into blood (Exodus 7:14-25), frogs had covered the land (Exodus 8:1-15), gnats had been dispatched (Exodus 8:16-19) followed by flies (Exodus 8:20-24). Egypt, in Biblical typology represents the land of sin and bondage, the state of an unbelieving person. Consequently, Pharaoh as the ruler of Egypt, pictures Satan. Moses, under God's direction, approached Pharaoh "about bringing out the sons of Israel from Egypt" (Exodus 6:27). Despite God's judgement through a series of plagues, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them as the Lord had said" (Exodus 7:13). Pharaoh repeatedly tempted Moses to compromise God's Word.

- Pharaoh said to Moses, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land" (Exodus 8:25). Satan endorses counterfeit religion (or religious activity) apart from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, only you shall not go very far away" (Exodus 8:28). If Satan cannot dissuade you from coming to know Jesus, he will tempt you to operate as a casual Christian, rendering you ineffective for Christ.
- Pharaoh said, "Go now, the men among you, and serve the Lord, for that is what you desire" (Exodus 10:11). "Men, you can go but leave your wives and children behind," was what Pharaoh was basically saying. Satan continues to undermine the headship and spiritual leadership of the man (distorting the true meaning of manhood) and wants to cause separation and division in the home. God's plan for the family is a generational trust of faith handed down from one generation to the next, primarily through the fathers. We continue to see God's design for the family under attack with catastrophic fallout.
- Pharaoh said, "Go, serve the Lord only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones can go with you." Satan continues to tempt us to leave our substance behind in Egypt. That is, don't invest your finances in the Kingdom.

The fall of the human race was precipitated by doubt, distortion, and deception. Satan continues to try to deceive us and entice us into disobedience, with good success if we fail to be armored up!

## II. The Armor – Ephesians 6:13-17

It's very interesting. If you want to know how the devil is going to attack you, look at each piece of armor, because God has given you each particular piece of armor to ward off a particular attack of the enemy. And so, here we see the strategy of the enemy even by the armor that our Lord has prescribed (Adrian Rogers, *Spiritual Warfare, Part 1*, sermon archives).

In this passage, Paul details the six pieces of armor:

**A. The Belt of Truth** (v. 14a). A Roman soldier wore a thick leather belt around his midsection about eight to twelve inches wide. A soldier wore a tunic, which draped loosely about his body during his daily routine. During work or warfare, he carefully gathered up his flowing robe and tucked it into a heavy leather belt, which gave him increased stability and greater mobility. Likewise, we are to war with our loins girded about with truth, which is the Word of God. Jesus said, "Your Word is truth (John 17:17). We are to gather every area of our life and tuck it into the belt of truth that it might not hinder our service to the Lord. Hebrews 12:1 says, "Let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Satan attacks by implanting his lies into our minds. God's Word is our defensive weapon against the lies of the enemy.

**B. The Breastplate of Righteousness** (v.14b). A Roman soldier wore a heavy, sleeveless piece of armor usually made of molded metal to protect his vital organs. There are two sides to righteousness – imputed righteousness and practical. God imputed the righteousness of Christ to us at the moment of our conversion (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). Peter's emphasis seems to be on *practical righteousness*, which can be described as the practical, personal outcropping of imputed righteousness. Satan wants to break our fellowship with the Lord, causing a breach between *our position of righteousness* and *our practice of righteousness*. He will attack us with unrighteousness, with sin. We put on the breastplate of righteousness by obeying our heavenly Father moment by moment. God supplies the power, but we must supply the willingness to obey.

**C. Shoes of the Gospel of Peace** (v.15). A Roman soldier wore heavy sandals studded with nails to protect his feet from the rough terrain. He was useless in battle if his feet were cut, blistered, or bruised. The soles were often embedded with bits of metal or nails for better traction. Similarly, we are to stand firm against the enemy. Satan will tempt us to become discouraged, despairing, and/or depressed. Refuse those thoughts. SATAN IS A LIAR. Jesus is our Prince of Peace! Look to Him to restore the joy of your salvation and fill you with His peace!

The goal of Satan and his demons in spiritual warfare is to keep you defeated. It is to keep you on the defense. That is how Satan keeps you from experiencing God's purposes, provision, forward movement, and blessings in your life. Satan knows he can't take away your salvation, so he attempts to make you a miserable Christian. He can't keep you out of Heaven, so he tries to make you experience hell on earth (Tony Evans, *Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, p. 78).

**D. The Shield of Faith** (v.16). A soldier's shield was usually about four feet by two and a half feet. It was made of wood covered by leather. Soldiers often soaked the leather cover in water to extinguish the flaming arrows of their adversaries. In the heat of the battle, he could crouch down and hide behind it from javelins or a barrage of arrows. The edges were made in such a way that an entire line of soldiers could interlock shields and march like a solid wall. Likewise, our faith is our defensive weapon against Satan's fiery darts. Satan's attack on Eve was so successful that he continues to cast doubt on God's Word. Lift the shield of faith, beloved, and refuse Satan's lies!

**E. The Helmet of Salvation** (v.17a). A helmet protected the entire head of the Roman soldier. The helmet of salvation protects the mind and thought-life of a Christian. Satan is going to attack us with condemnation, often concerning past sins. If we do not recognize his lies and take them captive to Christ, allowing Him to crucify the devil's tempting thoughts, we will believe them and ultimately act on

them. As we have already discovered the spiritual battle is won or lost at the threshold of the mind. Put on “the helmet of salvation.”

An added note: Satan **condemns us** with vague accusations in order to produce hopelessness. The Holy Spirit **convicts us** of very specific sin in order to produce repentance and restoration.

**F. The Sword of the Spirit** (v.17b). Roman soldiers went into battle welding two different types of swords. The first was called a “spatha”. This was typically about three feet long. They also carried a short sword called a “gladius” which was typically about 18 inches or so long. Here, Paul is referring to the smaller sword, deadly in hand-to-hand combat. The blade was double-edged and sharp as a surgeon’s scalpel and the wound inflicted was nearly always fatal. Our sword is the Word of God, and more accurately, we are to use **a word from the Word** - a specific verse or passage to defeat the enemy. Satan hopes you never learn the power the sword of the Spirit wields! He tempts us to underestimate the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit or the need to develop spiritual disciplines, such as studying the Word, meditating on the Word, and memorizing the Word, just to name a few. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

There is so much power in the sword of the Spirit that God gave it to us as the only piece of offensive weaponry in the entire armor. Maybe this sword is the only offensive piece in the collection because it is the only offensive piece necessary (Tony Evans, *Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, p. 123).

We have put on the armor once for all at the moment of salvation, but to ensure victory there must be daily appropriation of all that is ours in Christ. Spiritual warfare is not a sport; it is a life and death struggle with “the strong man” (Matthew 12:22-32) who has taken spiritual captives. Spiritual warfare is not for the carnal or casual Christian, but for those who are strong in the Lord and mature in the faith.

Truly our armor is not something, but Someone – Jesus Christ. For some Christians, the armor is of little or no effect. Sadly, they wear only the helmet of salvation. Their carnality makes them ineffective for the cause of Christ.

#### **V. Our Advantage – Ephesians 6:18-24**

Not only has the Lord provided the whole armor of God to us in order to overcome the wiles of the devil, but also He has granted us the privilege of prayer. Prayer is the way we appropriate the power to use our armor properly. We are to pray in the Spirit, according to the will of the Father. We are to persevere and stay at the task, all the while keeping our guard up against our enemy. In 1 Thessalonians 5:7, Paul writes, “Pray without ceasing.” That is, we should stay in communion with the Lord, not allowing sin to remain unchecked in our lives. Beloved, the armor is our battle attire. Prayer is how we put it on, keep it on, and appropriate what is ours in Jesus.

Suit up! Pray up! Stand firm against the schemes of the devil! Beloved, it is a high calling and privilege to worship, walk, and war for the Lord Jesus Christ!