

EYES WIDE OPEN

Ephesians 6:10-12

Ephesians 3:20 (NLT) *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*

REVIEW

In Ephesians 4:17 Paul told us that this means we do not live like the world.

1. *Put off the practices of the old self,*
2. *Be renewed in the spirit of our minds,*
3. *Put on practices of the new self.*

- **Paul has practically exhorted us to:**

- Walk in Unity (as Christ's Body) 4:1-16
- Walk as God's New Creation 4:17-32
- Walk in Love 5:1-7
- Walk in Light 5:8-14
- Walk in Wisdom 5:15-21
- Walk in Spirit-filled Alignment 5:22-6:9 (Marriage, Parent/Child, Workplace)

MESSAGE THEME: *"Live with EYES WIDE OPEN in a world of spiritual warfare."*

Intro.

- This one topic draws a line in the sand for many, if not most, Christians, pastors, and churches; "that of demons and spiritual warfare."
 - Have talked with pastors regarding the training we have titled *Living Set Free* because part of it teaches people how to deal with the spirit realm and the demonic; they want nothing to do with our training.
 - Some are intrigued and drawn to our training by the fruit they see in people's lives want to engage in the training and freedom ministry but want to minimize and mitigate the part that deals with the spirit realm, and particularly the demonic.
 - I understand; that was me years ago. I was reticent and unwilling to go there personally and as a church leader.
- **Twenty-four years ago, January 30, 2000, God threw me and the church I was pastoring into the middle of reality. (TELL STORY)**
- It revolutionized me, the ministry, and our church family then.
 - It has fundamentally influenced our church, HF, who we are, and how we do ministry.
 - It has impacted churches, leaders, and ministries around the world.

- Christians in Western civilization are inclined to *deny* what they cannot see or *disregard* what we cannot understand in our natural and empirical thinking.
- Most often, Christians are left living with *fear* regarding demons and live in *ignorance* concerning them.
- Are demons real? Do demons exist?

“The matter of demons is a question in that the post-Christian, Postmodern, Enlightenment-infused, materialistic, and cynical Western culture has evident difficulty in coming to terms with *evil*. Traumatic incidents such as school shootings, brutal attacks on Christians while at worship, and the inexplicable, unimaginable, and sadistic torture of human beings by barbaric groups like ISIS, test our journalists’ capacity to report the nature of such brutality.

The answer is quite simple if not mysterious, and plain if not perplexing: **Yes, evil is a real and present danger.** Even more, there are supernatural powers, authorities, and disembodied creatures that are quite active, though unseen, in the realm of humankind. Their history is revealed. Their powers are limited. Their activities are often predictable. Their allegiance is known. Their abilities have been unmasked. And their future is decidedly grim. **Demons are, indeed, most real, and most active.”**

Dr. Michael Milton

- Demonology is the study of demons, their existence, their objectives, how they operate, their limitations, the true Christian’s capacity against them, and their judgment.
 - *To ignore the biblical understanding of demons is done at our own peril!*

BE STRONG vs. 10

Ephesians 6:10 (ESV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

Finally

- D.A. Carson states that it was a common literary practice in Paul’s day and culture to end a letter with an appeal that took up the central message of the letter.
- Paul recasts his message to believers, as an *army, spiritual and kingdom warriors!!*
- Paul is addressing his readers from a position of strength, advantage Christian!!
 - We are the recipient of every spiritual blessing,
 - our union with Christ,
 - Christ being sovereign and far above all,
 - The resurrection power of God is at work in us,
 - The Christian is seated in with Christ at the Father’s right hand,
 - We are newly created in God’s image, His coding in us,

- We are to live Spirit-filled and empowered.
- *Finally*, indicates that the message of the book of Ephesians, is God's ekklesia in Spiritual Kingdom Warfare.

Be Strong

Ephesians 6:10 (ESV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

A Command

- It is an imperative mood, that means we are commanded to *be strengthened*.

To Be Received

- It is in the passive voice, meaning, it is something that the subject receives.
- "Be Strong" is better translated *be strengthened* or receive the strength that comes from His might.
- The command is *to be strong* not in your might, but in the might, power and strength that only can come from God.

SUIT-UP vs. 11

Ephesians 6:11 (ESV) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

God's Armor

- The manner that we are strong is the strength of God's might through His divinely powerful weapons identified as His armor.
- Again, we receive a command, it is not an option. We must put on God's armor.

The Purpose

- That we will stand firm against Satan's schemes, methods, and strategies.
- Gk. Wd. *Methodeias* – Scheme: method, strategy, craftiness, orderly and technical procedure, all in a context of evil.
 - It indicates intelligence and reasoning.
- We will not be able to stand strong, resist, and advance against Satan in the energy and capacity of our natural strength and reason.
- It requires a capacity beyond ourselves, it requires God's strength and power.

EYES WIDE OPEN vs. 12

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

The Nature of Our Struggle - Wrestle

- *We wrestle!*
- Paul uses a Greek athletic term in the word “wrestle,” which was a hand-to-hand battle decided when one held the other down with his hand upon his neck.
- It was a battle to the death, typically with the victor living and the defeated one being killed.
- At the least, the loser had his eyes gouged out and was blinded for the rest of his days.
- The reader of this letter was very familiar with this word and event and understood the desperate and sober nature of Paul’s description.

The Realm of Our Struggle - Spiritual

- The reason why we cannot war according to the flesh or materially oriented weapons is that the fight is not against flesh and blood.
- Weapons of the flesh will not compete, let alone prevail in a war that is spiritual and an enemy that is spiritual.
- *Like bringing a knife to a fight where the enemy uses fighter jets.*
- This is the reason for the need to be strengthened by and in the strength of the Lord’s might!
- The reason that we must put on the full armor of God is that the enemy is using weapons and strategies against us that material armor will not withstand and protect against.

Recognize the Enemy – Demonic

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV) . . . but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- The struggle is with spirit beings in their intelligence, powers, and capacities.
- Our enemies are not human but demonic!! They are powerful with a super-material or supernatural power that we cannot compete within our natural intelligence, strength, and capacity!!
- Demonic beings use flesh and blood as mere tools in their war against us.
- *The Western Church of Jesus Christ must quit living in denial and face up to the fact of their real and immanent presence and assault against us!!*

ILLUST. *Paul's readers, the saints in Ephesus, undoubtedly were familiar with this, being of a culture that was immersed in occultic activity. Many if not most of the believers at the church of Ephesus had lived life with the demonic (Acts 19:13-20)!!*

Demonic Traits

Powerful

- Gk. Wd. *arche* - Rulers: The word translated *rulers* or *principalities* speaks of those who are in the first place, the principal ones, those who hold preeminent positions.
- Gk. Wd. *exousia* - Authorities: The word translated *powers* or *authorities* refers to those who govern, also used of earthly governors or magistrates.
 - *Rulers & Powers* are high-ranking officers in Satan's evil kingdom that oversee large operations of evil.
- Gk. Wd. *kosmokrator* Cosmic Powers of Darkness: The word translated *cosmic powers* was found in the Orphic Hymns of Satan, in the Gnostic writings of the devil, in rabbinical writings of the angel of death.
 - This word also referred to the power and domain of earthly world rulers such as the Roman emperor.
 - The Scriptures often identify the close association of earthly kingdoms and rulers with demonic beings.

Isaiah 14:4, 12-14 The King of Babylon referred to in what is believed by many to be a description of Satan's insurrection.

Ezekiel 28:12, 11-19 The King of Tyre is referred to in what is believed by many to be a description of Satan's pre-fall existence, the reason for his fall, and his post-fall fate.

Daniel 10:13, 20 The battle that the messenger/warrior angel had in reaching Daniel with an answer to his request of God was opposed by the prince/king of Persia (demonic being), and he would return to resume his battle not only with the prince of Persia but also of Greece.

Daniel 10:20 (ESV) Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come.

- These are world forces from the headquarters of Satan's war room whose assignment it is to infiltrate various systems of world governments and culture, all to pattern them after Satan's order, values, & agendas.

Evil

- Spiritual forces of evil in the Heavens: These demonic beings are described as evil and wicked which describes their nature, schemes, and actions
- They have no righteousness whatsoever.

John Stott says, “*They have no code of honor whatsoever; no noble feelings; they recognize no Geneva Convention to civilize the weapons of their warfare even partially. They are utterly unscrupulous and are ruthless in the pursuits of their malicious designs against mankind and God’s creation.*”

- It is believed by some that it is possible that this phrase identifies a distinction of demonic beings who cultivate and energize particular immoralities of wickedness such as sexual perversions, diverse relational abuses, scandalous behaviors, occultic activities, various exploitations and injustices, and all of sin’s wickedness and darkness.

Intelligent

- We already learned that *Satan is tactically shrewd and a genius at scheming and deception.*
- We know that he seldom attacks openly and *prefers to work covertly* in his darkness.
- When he does transform himself into an *angel of light*, it is to catch people in an unsuspecting state (**2 Cor. 11:14**).
- He tries to enter communities of God’s people disguised as a sheep, though he is a wolf that seeks to kill and devour (**Acts 20:29-30**).
- He seeks to keep off guard, sometimes coming in as a roaring lion (**1 Pet. 5:8**) or as a beautiful, beguiling serpent-like creature who hides his venom and fangs until he has secured you (**Gen. 3:1**).
- He will come at you with intimidation to cause you to succumb to fear or allure you with lusts of the flesh, the lusts of your eyes, and the pride of life.

- *One of Satan’s greatest and most successful schemes in the Western world and the Church of Jesus Christ in the Western world is to persuade people that he does not exist or that he is not a relevant concern, or that it is best that he be left alone!*

APPLICATION

- Courageous faith – no fear!
- Biblical intelligence – no ignorance!
- Biblical reality – no denial!