

Sermon 25: Facing Life's Greatest Battle: Ephesians 6:10-13

Text: Ephesians 6:10-12 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand..."

Introduction: Ephesians breaks into two basic sections

- **Section 1: Doctrine: Chapters 1-3**
 - Who am I?
 - How did I get into this position?
 - What is my calling in this position?
- **Section 2: Practice: Chapters 4-6**
 - How should I walk in this new position?
 - How should I relate to others in this position?
 - How should I look at life in the light of eternity?
- **This section pulls everything together in a practical, vivid way:**
 - Paul united doctrine and practice.
 - He showed the true nature of the Christian life.
 - He told us to utilize everything given in Christ.
- **Today we will examine the reality of this spiritual battle.**

Summary: As redeemed people, we must put on and take up everything we have been given in Christ to stand.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: Embrace His strength: 6:10 "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might..."

- **This world is full of constant, inescapable conflict:**
 - True for unbelievers
 - True for young, inexperienced Christians
 - True for complacent, backslidden Christians
 - True for strong, mature Christians
- **We encounter two realms in conflict: Colossians 1:13** God has "Delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son..."
 - Unbelievers are slaves to sin and the kingdom of darkness.
 - Believers have been liberated from that kingdom yet permitted to be influence by it as God allows.
- **Christ is the only source of that victory: 6:10** "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might..."

- Only He can deliver unbelievers from the kingdom of darkness.
- He has delivered us, yet we must live in the light of that victory.
- **Three ways He express our need:**
 - **"Be strong:"** Let God empower you every day.
 - **Present tense:** because it must be a way of life.
 - **Passive voice:** because we should not rely on our own strength.
 - **"In the Lord:"** He is the source of this strength.
 - **"In His power:"** This strength lies in His demonstrated power and authority.
 - **Christ crushed Satan on the cross: Colossians 2:14-15** "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us...nailing it to his cross...having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it..."
 - **He triumphed over death at the resurrection: Romans 1:4** He was "Declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead..."
 - **Creation belongs to Him because He made it, upholds it, and He redeemed it: Philippians 2:10** "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth..."
 - **"In His might:"** He kindly supplies what we constantly lack from His limitless inherent power.
 - **1 Peter 4:11** "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth..."
 - **2 Corinthians 12:9** "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness..."

Truth 2: Embrace His equipping: 6:11 "Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand..."

- **We must stand by "putting on" and "taking up" the whole armor of God:**
 - **We are called to "stand:"** this means, hold what you are given
 - **6:11** "That ye may be able to stand..."
 - **6:13** "That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day..."
 - **6:13-14** "Having done all, to stand. Stand therefore..."
 - **He does the work and we get to be a part of it:**
 - **He builds: Matthew 16:18** "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it..."
 - **He labors: Matthew 11:28** "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest..."
 - **He gives the increase: 1 Corinthians 3:6** "God gave the increase..."

- **He produces fruitfulness: John 15:5** "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing..."
- **Victorious Christian living does not come by our sheer willpower, natural strength, or practical wisdom.**
 - Everything we need is provided in Him and cultivated by Him.
 - He has provided the whole armor and given us the duty to put it on and take it up.
- **Everything we need is found in Him:**
 - **Colossians 2:8-10** "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ...ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power..."
 - **2 Peter 1:3** "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue..."
 - **2 Corinthians 9:8** "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work..."

Truth 3: Embrace His wisdom: 6:12 "We wrestle not against flesh and blood..."

- **First: Our true foe is not who we see or what we handle:**
 - **Negatively: 6:12** "We wrestle not against flesh and blood..."
 - Not people
 - Not circumstances
 - Not hardships
 - **Positively: 6:12** "But against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places..."
 - **The repetition of "against" emphasizes the weight of this conflict.**
 - **There is an unseen yet highly organized structure of demonic influence under Satan's rule.**
 - **"Principalities"** with order, rank, and assigned jurisdiction.
 - **"Powers"** with a well-ordered chain of command.
 - **"Rulers of the darkness of this world"** with a well-coordinated effort to influence governments, philosophical trends, and moral decay.
 - **"Spiritual wickedness in high places"** which brings this influence to the personal heart level.
- **Second: The Christian life is a life of struggle:**
 - **"Wrestle:"** a term describing an intense one on one combat.

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ..."
- **2 Timothy 4:7** "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith..."
- **"In the evil day:"** There is a seasonal aspect to this struggle.
 - **1 Peter 1:6-7** "Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ..."
- **Third: This struggle focuses on how we think:** "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil..."
 - **"Wiles:"** A calculated and skillful deception.
 - **Ephesians 4:14** "Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive..."
 - **Satan's authority over us is broken.**
 - He cannot physically force us to do anything.
 - He uses what he knows about us to exploit our vulnerabilities:
 - Temperament
 - Seasons of life
 - Personal history
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - External pressures
 - Internal pressures
 - **He uses deception to persuade us into voluntary enslavement.**
 - **James 1:14** "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed..."
 - **2 Timothy 2:25-26** "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will..."
 - **John 8:32** "The truth shall make you free..."

Application: Have a realistic perspective.

- **First: Don't be apathetic:**
 - If you are not a Christian, you are living in Satan's realm.
 - Let this passage shake you and flee to Christ for salvation.
- **Second: Don't embrace defeat when discouraged:**
 - Everyone is in a battle, and the presence of struggle is a normal.
 - If you are trying to live the Christian life in your own strength, you will be discouraged and constantly defeated.
 - Let this passage challenge you to embrace what God has given.
- **Third: Reject common lies:**
 - **God doesn't care about me: Psalm 103:13-14** "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust..."
 - **I can't get up when I have fallen: 1 John 1:9** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness..."
 - **No one sees so it's ok: Psalm 19:13** "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression..."
 - **I have the right to be bitter: Hebrews 12:15** Look diligently "Lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled..."
 - **I can't keep going: Ephesians 1:18-22** "That ye may know...the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead...Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet..."
- **Fourth: Embrace a confident yet sober posture:**
 - Recognize you are in a battle that won't be won by sheer willpower, natural strength, or practical wisdom.
 - Don't get distracted from the real enemy.
 - Be sobered by his ability to target and deceive you.
 - Be honest about your vulnerabilities and put on and take up what He has provided.
 - Stand in His strength, believing you have everything you need in Him.