

Ephesians 6:10-13

Good morning and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn to Ephesians 6? We left off last time in our study in verse 9, so we'll pick up in verse 10 and study all of only 4 verses, we'll go through 13.

It doesn't take long after you become a Christian to realize there is a battle going on. Of course we know there's the un-ending fight between the spirit and our flesh. **Romans 7 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice**

But there is another battle taking place. An insidious, invisible war all around us, and you won't hear about it on the news. There won't be any headlines online at Fox news or CNN about it. It's a battle taking place around us in the unseeable spiritual realm. And whether we like it or not, each of us are in a battle against spiritual wickedness.

Years ago one of the most famous radio broadcasters was a man named Paul Harvey-do you remember him. "And now, the rest of the story". To help illustrate the reality of this war,

Paul harvey video?

Let's read verses 10-13, and then we'll pray

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against

powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,[fn] against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The title of this morning's message is THE NEED TO STAND
Let's pray

As we talk about spiritual warfare, and the demonic realm, it's important to know how that originated. The bible tells us the origin of spiritual warfare-the fall of Satan in **Isaiah 14 12** "How

you are fallen from heaven,

O Lucifer,[fn] son of the morning!

How you are cut down to the ground,

You who weakened the nations!

13 For you have said in your heart:

'I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;

I will also sit on the mount of the congregation

On the farthest sides of the north;

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,

I will be like the Most High.'

15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,

To the lowest depths of the Pit.

16 "Those who see you will gaze at you,

And consider you, saying:

'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,

Who shook kingdoms,

17 Who made the world as a wilderness

And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'

What a day that will be!

But until that day, you and I are in a battle, and our ultimate enemy is the devil and his demonic forces. They were once angels, until pride filled their hearts. Satan is now angry and envious. He hates all that God holds dear. And that's what puts you and I in the line of fire.

As we set the stage for this spiritual warfare study over the next couple of weeks, Christians are prone to make two mistakes regarding this spiritual warfare. Some Christians underestimate Satan, while other Christians overestimate him.

First, Satan loves it when he's underestimated. Lotsa people think of satan as a little imp in red leotards - with horns, hooves, and a pitchfork. Nothing pleases him more than to be conveyed as a comic strip character. In fact, Satan's greatest achievement is convincing so many people he doesn't exist. Research shows that 58% of Americans believe Satan is not real.

I don't know about you, but when I look at the horrible wickedness in the world today it's obvious to me there has to be a devil.

I like what one pastor said, "If you don't believe in the devil try working for the Lord awhile." We ought not underestimate the devil. He's ruthless, and he has no morals or principles. His evil is

beyond imagination, and he's extremely experienced. And he's much more powerful than we are on our own.

But on the flip side, some people overestimate the devil. Remember, Satan is not God's equal. The devil is a created being. Satan is infinitely inferior to God. Understand too, Satan's reach and power are limited by the will of God.

In the book of Job Satan was not allowed to harm a single hair on Job's head without God's permission.

Recall in Exodus when Moses threw down his rod it turned into a snake. The magicians of Egypt did likewise. But that's when Moses' serpent swallowed up their serpents. Satan had power, but God has far more power. **1 John 4:4, You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

Many Christians these days give the devil too much credit. Some will even say that everything is the result of a demon: loneliness, fear, lust. I read one preacher's list, "the demon of junk food, the demon of excessive talking, the demon of sun bathing, the demon of warts, and the demon of baldness."

It's much easier to blame the weakness of our flesh, even our own sin, on the devil. But most of our problems are of our own making.

So to be clear as we go through these verses, yes there is a real, invisible spiritual battle, but make no mistake Satan has none of

God's attributes. He's no threat to God. In fact, Satan's fate is already sealed: **Revelation 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

10 Finally, "Finally" means "For the rest". It comes on the heels of everything else we just studied. **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.** How we need to take heed to this word today! We live in a generation that continues to make people soft, including Christians. And the problem is a lot of Christians are weak because their lives are fully centered on how they are doing, how they are feeling, how they are treated.

Have you noticed the more we focus on ourselves the more miserable we become?

It's not about being strong within myself, it's about being strong in the Lord and the power of His might! Listen, face the devil on your own and you're no match.

When a Christian confronts Satan we never fight for victory, we always fight from victory. We rely on the victory won by Jesus.

The bible gives us the blueprint for being strong in the Lord **Jude 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"**

Instead of ranting, raving, and name-calling against Satan - Michael simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Michael kept the Lord Jesus between him and Satan, and won the battle. He was strong in the Lord. and thats a blueprint for us-keep Jesus b/w us and Satan.

Our empowerment, our ability to be strong in the Lord only comes from being in Jesus. **John 15 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**
5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

When we stand against the devil in the strength of the Lord, the devil backs down. Its like that old thing we used to say as kids- Our dad can beat their dad!

Now if you wanna read something good on spiritual realms and warfare read Billy Graham's book on angels. Billy said God put it on his heart to write the book because there were so many books on demons, and the devil. But there are over 250 references in the Bible to God's holy angels, and how powerful they are.

Revelation 20 1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

It's only one Angel who binds Satan and throws him into the abyss. It isn't Michael, it isn't Gabriel, there's no famous Angel

here that we know. It's not even named-maybe its Norman, Harry, just some Angel, and he binds Satan for 1000 years and throws them into the abyss.

Satan knows he's no match for us when we're strong in the Lord. But this helps to shape the Devil's tactics...

Since most of the time Satan's bold and blatant maneuvers drive us to the Lord where we gain more strength, Satan prefers, not the frontal, but the subtle assault.

He has ways to slip in behind us to cut us off from our spiritual supply line. The devil's only hope is to distract us from the Lord, or weaken our faith, or get us too busy to pray.

Have you noticed that sickness, problems at work, or problems at home often cause us to seek the Lord? Yet Satan works to create the opposite effect. He wants us to forget about the Lord.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The detailed teaching of spiritual warfare in this section tells us 2 very essential truths. First, we must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Then, we must put on the whole armor of God-we'll get to the details of that armor next week. Both of these are essential, yet sadly alot of teachings neglect the first part-being strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

Because think about it. If you take a weak man who can barely stand, and you put the best armor on him, he will still be an

ineffective soldier. So equipping for Christian combat must begin with the principle, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

But verse 11 also tells us that you and I need special protection. And God has exactly what we need. He provides us with spiritual armor

It's wisely been said that life is not a playground. Life is a battleground. And the reason so many Christians are spiritually weak is because they're not armed for battle.

SHOW PIC If you can believe it, next month will be the 80th anniversary of D-day, one of the most important days in American history. You've all seen pictures or movies of the men who bravely stormed the beaches of Normandy that day. **CLOSE PIC**

Don't you wonder how that scene would play out with our society today? **SHOW PIC** We'd have a bunch of men refusing to go, too busy wearing footy pajamas and playing video games!. And the same attitude has crept into the church as many Christians refuse to put on the whole armor of God. **CLOSE PIC**

The Bible tells us to put on our armor, to take advantage of the equipment God has given us to navigate life and negotiate the war that surrounds us.

We must never forget, we can stand against the wiles of the devil—the cunning, clever attacks of Satan—only to the degree

that we're strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, protected with the whole armor of God.

Why is it critical that we put on the armor of God? We're gonna break down verse 12 piece by piece

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, pause here. Any time we're wrestling against flesh and blood, anytime we're striving against people, we're fighting the wrong enemy.

People are not the enemy. Joe Biden is not the enemy. Pelosi is not the enemy. They are hostages of Satan, and listen you do not declare war on hostages!!!

See the problem is it's easier to declare war on a person than it is to intercede in prayer for them isn't it?

We can't forget these are souls on their way to hell-are we not moved by that? Isn't that reason enough to stop in our tracks and fall on our knees in prayer for these people?

Folks-don't declare war on the hostages.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities,

Pause here. Evidently, spiritual forces or entities are organized into principalities.

For twenty-one days, Daniel fasted and prayed as he set his face to seek God. At the end of that time, an angel appeared to him, **Daniel 10:12 Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.**

Evidently, the demonic forces overseeing certain areas are particularly potent.

V 12 continues

...12 against powers, “principalities” speaks of territories or regions, whereas “powers” speak of the demonic forces that keep people in their slavery to sin.

We can take people through hundreds of hours of counseling, but if we don’t deal with the real issue of principalities and powers, they’ll never be truly set free.

...12 against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[fn] Most theologians believe this speaks of the demonic forces that oversee the leaders in any given society.

Finally v 12

against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. We don’t have to get caught up in the study of demonology. However it’s clear demons are on many different levels and of many

different ranks, yet they all have one goal: to knock the Christian down from their place of standing.

We'll end our study in v13

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Notice the phrase-that you may be able: Without the strength of God and the protection of spiritual armor, it's impossible to stand against the attacks of spiritual enemies.

Regardless of where you live, what circumstances we may be involved in, or who occupies the White House, we can stand. Notice 3 times stand, withstand, stand. This is not passive. It's an active decision-withstanding these forces.

God has given His people a call, a mission, a course to fulfill. Satan will do his best to stop it. When Satans forces attack and intimidate and try to infiltrate, we are to stand.

We're to do the Lord's work and stand against every hint of spiritual opposition.

But I know, just like you know, sometimes it's hard to stand isn't it? Sometimes there are circumstances in our lives that are so brutally difficult that we can struggle to even breathe, let alone feel like we're able to stand against spiritual opposition.

And in those moments, in the dark, in the loneliness, in the pain, we need to remember that God has already given every Christian a glorious standing.

We stand in grace **Romans 5:2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,.

We stand in the gospel, remember that Jesus has won the victory! And since He's won the victory, we can fully trust that He's given us everything we need to fight the battles that come our way.

My dad, is a whole lot stronger than their dad!!!

All in all, there is a lot indicated by that one word, stand.

It means that we are going to be spiritually attacked.

It means that we must not be frightened.

It means that we can't be half-hearted in the fight-we have to be committed.

It means that we are ready in our position and aware to the movement of the enemy.

It means that we do not entertain the thought of retreating.

Folks, let's be strong in the Lord, and the power of His might.

