

Cornerstone Bible Church  
Lesson Notes by Sarah Cox  
Grace: *A Bible Study on Ephesians for Women* by Keri Folmar

**Lesson 10**  
**Ephesians 6:10-24**  
**Be Strong, Stand Firm, Pray Continually**

Does it surprise you to realize that Paul's call for the Christian to stand firm and put on the armor of God comes after his very practical description of how Christians are to treat one another within the church and the home? Paul has encouraged them to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace", to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, to forgive one another, to submit to one another within the church. Within the home and workplace, Paul just finished telling Christian wives and husbands, parents and children, masters and slaves how to treat one another. And now a call to stand firm in the armor of God?

Spiritual battle lines have always seemed more, well for bigger issues, to me. There have been a few times in my life where I was aware that I was really at battle and clung to the Lord for help, knowing that I could only stand with his help. But it is fascinating to me to consider that Paul has put this call to stand after such seemingly everyday commands. I mean, I know submitting to my husband's leadership is not always easy – but I never really thought of it as a spiritual battle where I needed God's armor. Having a heart that is always thankful and making melody to the Lord or maintaining the unity of the church – again not always easy, but not necessarily requiring God's armor either! I mean armor is for serious matters.

If I need the armor of God for these 'everyday' aspects of Christian life, I better know what it is and how to use it!

Remember that Paul is writing to the Ephesian Christians. He knows some of them personally and has a deep mutual love with the elders of the Ephesians church. Paul is in prison in Rome and really does not know how much longer he has to live. He has to realize that this may be his last communication to the Ephesians. Can you imagine the emotion he has writing to them? What to include? He can't put down everything in his heart and mind!

We know that with the help of the Holy Spirit, Paul has given the Ephesian Christians all of this great, deep truth about who they were apart from Christ – dead in their sins – and how they were saved by grace through faith according to the foreknowledge and purposes of God, by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and they are now sealed by the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of their eternity with God until they acquire possession of it!

Then with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul goes on to tell the Ephesian Christians about their unity in Christ, how Jesus Christ has broken down any wall of separation between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians such that there are just 'Christians' in his church. Then Paul lays out how all Christians should live in practical ways. He wants so much for them to live lives pleasing to God with full assurance of their salvation and joy in the Lord! But he knows it is a battle, so he ends his letter with this

final call to action for them. They need to know how to stand strong in the battle if they are going to live out everything that comes before this in his letter.

Paul's call to battle is to

1. Be Strong in the Lord (vs 10-12)
2. Stand Firm in God's Armor (vs 13-17)
3. Pray Continually in the Spirit (vs 18-24)

Let's consider each of these.

### **Be Strong in the Lord**

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 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. Ephesians 6:10-12*

It is so important to notice here that we are not commanded to be strong on our own strength. We are to be strong **in the Lord** and in the strength of **his might**. Why? Because the battle is not with flesh and blood, but it is spiritual. These are both themes that run through Ephesians.

Paul is sharing his prayer for the Ephesians back in chapter 1. In verse 19 he says.. "and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of [God's] great might" and then describes how that great might raised Christ from the dead and seated him at God's right hand in the heavenly places. He continues to say that Christ is seated above and has defeated "all rule and authority and power and dominion". These are the entities we battle against and God's power has already proven victorious against them! We live in the already and not-yet. God has already defeated these powers but has not-yet removed them from the earth. So we need HIS STRENGTH to fight this battle!

Again in 3:16 Paul is praying for the Ephesians "that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being". Paul ends this prayer with giving glory to God in verse 20 as God is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us". That is some serious power!

What do we wrestle against? Satan and his cohorts. Sounds a little frightening? You must remember who is in you is greater than and has already defeated this enemy! Satan is wily and scheming, he wants to tear down Christians and make them stumble in their walks, desiring to take glory away from God. When does this wrestling take place? Here and now, in this present, evil age. (Eph. 5:15)

We **MUST** be strong in the Lord. This is not a battle we can fight on our own but in God's strength, we can stand strong!

### **Stand Firm in God's Armor**

*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 firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming*

*darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" Ephesians 6:13-18*

Take up the WHOLE armor of God. Paul says this twice (vss 11 and 13). Not just part of the armor, all of it! This is how you are going to stand strong in God's power is by putting on His whole armor! He has provided it to you but you need to take action to put it on. So what is it? We can imagine that he was looking at one of the Roman guards near him and thinking about what the Christian needs in spiritual battle.

God's armor for you to put on:

#### Belt of truth

- Holding it all together, making the soldier prepared for action.
- The belt would have been used to tuck in or hold up the inner garments so that they would not impede the soldier's movements. Think about Paul's emphasis on knowing God's truth throughout this letter. We cannot hope to begin to stand firm if we don't know the truth of God.
- Eph 1:13 "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit"
- 4:15, 21 "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ", "... the truth is in Jesus."
- The belt of truth is God's truth wrapped around you, preparing you for battle.

#### Breastplate of Righteousness

- Protecting the chest and abdomen from attack.
- This breastplate is not our own righteousness but the righteousness we have from Jesus Christ; Christ's righteousness imputed to us by God when we place our faith in Jesus Christ.
- 1 Cor 5:21 "For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
- Romans 3:21-22 "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law... - the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."
- This is so helpful when Satan comes accusing us of current or past failures and sins. Without the breastplate of Christ's righteousness, those accusations can cause us to draw back from God, ashamed of our sin like Adam and Eve hid from God when they sinned. Drawing away from God is the opposite of standing in his strength! When I rely on Christ's righteousness however, those attacks by Satan don't cause me to draw back from God, rather they remind me over and again of how much I need Jesus Christ and his righteousness every day! I can draw close to God confessing my sin and finding new strength to stand firm because of Christ's righteousness covering me. What a blessing!

#### Shoes, readiness given by the gospel of peace

- Shoes for battle, thick soled and designed to help the soldier grip the ground and not slip

- This is taken two ways, a preparedness to share the gospel or the gospel making the soldier prepared to stand their ground. Consider that Paul's letter starts with 3 chapters of telling the Ephesians Christians all that they are and have in Christ. He is telling them the gospel over and over, in different ways, desiring for them to really grasp what is theirs as they are children of God by his mercy and love and grace through their faith in Jesus Christ alone. *Then* Paul tells them how to live in light of that.
- These shoes of the readiness given by the gospel of peace is the readiness to stand firm that comes as we saturate ourselves in understanding the gospel of Christ. He preached peace to those who were far off and those who were near and gave them both access in one Spirit to the Father (Eph. 2:17-18). This gospel is sure footing for spiritual battle.

#### Shield of Faith

- Not a little Captain America kind of shield, but a big, thick shield that your whole body could hide behind. Often wood drenched in water to quench any fiery arrows that would come at it.
- "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. This is so important. Do we believe God or not? Do we believe that he will do all that he has said he will do or not? Is it possible to have faith that God will accept Jesus's sacrifice to cover my sin and give me peace with himself and then NOT believe that he will do everything else in his word that he has promised to do? Hebrews 11 goes on to describe a rich history of God keeping his promises. He is trustworthy. He is faithful even when we are not.
- When Satan comes in saying that God isn't in control that a virus or government or whatever is out of control and you should be afraid, will you duck behind your shield of faith and let it block that fiery dart? Choosing to trust in God's sovereignty though you cannot see it at the moment? When Satan says that God cannot satisfy your every need and that there is an easy way to take control by going behind your employers back 'just this once' to get what you think you need, will you instead get behind your shield of faith trusting that God can and will satisfy your every need in his time and his way, assured that your hope will not be disappointed? (Romans 5:5)

#### Helmet of Salvation:

- The helmet of salvation or Paul puts in 1 Thes 5:8 "and for a helmet the hope of salvation".
- Paul talks about this hope in Ephesians 1:18. Here Paul is praying for the Ephesians to have "the eyes of [their] hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints". Paul also reminds them that they have been sealed with the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee or down payment on that inheritance until they acquire it.
- In Ephesians 4:4 Paul reminds them that there is "one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call –."
- No matter what comes our way, we cling to this hope of salvation. Not fearing what man or other spiritual powers may bring our way, we know that in the end, we have eternity with God. We know that Jesus Christ himself through death destroyed the one

who has the power of death, that is the devil and delivered all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Hebrews 2:14-15) We have victory over Satan's temptations to sin because Christ has conquered death and given us eternal life.

#### Sword of the Spirit:

- Not a long sword here, rather a short dagger used in close combat.
- Paul tells us this is the Word of God.
- The only offensive piece of armor listed. This is what we go on the attack with. Keep in mind that we are not wrestling with flesh and blood – so we are not attacking other people with the Word of God (as Christians are sometimes accused of doing!) We are to go after “arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- Because the sword is offensive, it is to be used to bring truth to those who are captive to Satan's lies and schemes and set those captives free. Much like shining light on sinful behavior exposes it with the goal of waking up sinners to their need for Christ as Ephesians 13-14 describes. People need to hear God's truth, it cuts away the lies of Satan and displays to each person their need for Jesus Christ as their Savior. As their hearts are “naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom [they] must give account” (Hebrews 4:13) God uses his Word to set prisoners free and he allows us to be a part of this as we do it with His Sword and in His Strength!

Ladies, if we are going to have a chance of standing firm against Satan's attacks, we must put on the WHOLE armor of God. And though it may not seem necessary in day-to-day life, we never know when Satan or his cohorts will attack. We need to be prepared every day.

Considering each of the pieces of armor again for a moment, it is so clear how much each piece requires you to know and study and memorize and meditate on God's word. Not one of these pieces of armor is not informed by knowing God and his promises according to how he has revealed himself in his word! We must be continually in God's Word to have on His armor!

#### **Pray Continually in the Spirit**

*“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:18-20*

There is second aspect to effective battle with God's armor. We must be continually in prayer in the Spirit. Putting on God's armor without praying is like have a car with no gasoline. It isn't going to do you any good. Praying is our acknowledgement that moment by moment, blow by blow we need God's help, His strength to stand firm in the battle. We need it to withstand the attacks and to utilize each piece of defensive armor. We need God's help to use the Sword of the Spirit in boldy proclaiming God's truth to the world around us. There is no aspect of the battle that we do not need God's help in. That help comes as we pray, pray, and pray some more. Not that God owes us anything as we pray. Its not like rubbing a magic lamp and then getting our requests answered. Praying is our acknowledgement to God

that we know any victory comes from Him and reminder to ourselves that the battle is won on God's strength and not our own.

### **Concluding Thoughts and Call to Action**

To see that Paul highlights day-to-day aspects of the Christian walk and follows them with a call to gear up for battle brings a seriousness to these issues - these issues that otherwise are easy to down-play, make irrelevant, unimportant or even unnecessary. This shows us their seriousness, doesn't it? And it should draw our attention to how much we need God's strength and armor EVERY day in order to walk in a manner worthy of our calling!

If you have time, how good it would be to go back through this very short letter to the Ephesians and think again on what Paul wrote. What did he choose to include in his instructions to the Ephesians that he capped off with a call to battle? What is in there that you have not taken seriously enough? What have you made light of that God has shown to be important?

What are you doing to prepare for battle? Are you putting on the pieces of God's armor by spending time with him? Are you storing God's Word in your heart and mind such that you have a belt of truth, a breastplate of righteousness, shoes prepared with the gospel of peace, a shield of faith, a helmet of salvation, and a sword of the Spirit? You must be in God's Word or you are going to battle with pieces of armor missing.

Are you praying continually in the Spirit? Are you constantly acknowledging to God your need for his help and strength? Are you even aware of your moment to moment need for him?

Finally, are you battling alongside (not with!) other Christians? We see Paul's final comments in his letter his love for the Ephesians and their love and concern for him as well. Paul demonstrates for us that in addition to praying for ourselves, that we should pray for one another as we love and care for one another in Christ.

Fight the good fight, my sisters in Christ, in God's strength and for His glory!