Fighting To Win — Delivery Transcript

Ephesians 6:10–20 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, November 1, 2020 · *Winning The Invisible War*

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All right, if you will take your Bibles and open them up to Ephesians chapter 6, we're going to finish up a series we started a couple of weeks ago on spiritual warfare. And the whole idea of Satan and demons sometimes makes a lot of people uncomfortable. But what if I told you that Satan and demons do exist, but what they want more than anything else is not your recognition as much as they want your destruction? Would that not make a little bit more sense of why we don't see the kind of demonic activity that you might see in a third world country or in a scary movie?

They don't really want your recognition as much as they do your destruction. What if Satan and demons were the animating force behind the assumptions in our culture that the thing that matters most is money and the American dream? What if Satan and demons were behind the assumptions that sexual pleasure and marrying the right kind of person will solve all my problems in life? What if they were the ones behind the assumptions that church and God and all those kinds of things are really just nonsense? It's a crutch that people use; that's not really the way to peace and happiness in life.

I really believe that Satan and demons aren't so much concerned about your recognition as they are your destruction and my destruction, and that they are in fact in our midst at work, in the family, in the culture, in the church, seeking to tear apart what it is that God wants to keep together. And that's been the basic thesis behind this series that we've been in that they use things like anger and bitterness and sexual temptation in the family to tear apart what God wants to keep together. That in the culture they have infected things like our cultural institutions, news media, the arts, entertainment.

They're even in our politics, getting people riled up to think if we could only elect this person, then our nation could be saved and all of our problems solved, or if we elect this

other person, then we're all doomed. And they're at work in the church, Not only convincing Christians of those kinds of lies, but also getting Christians wrapped up in silly controversies and quarrels and taking their attention off of the main thing, which is the Great Commission. And so Paul writes to this church and he writes to us today to say Satan and demons are real.

They are not after your recognition. They're after your destruction. Therefore, you need to wake up to the reality that you are, in fact, in a war, and here's how you can fight to win. And so let's read our passage together, Ephesians chapter 6, starting in verse 10. And we're going to read the whole section all the way down to verse 20. So Paul says, 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 spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 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 up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God 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. So for those of you that are just joining us in the series, I want to give you a brief review of where we've been and then we'll wrap it up. As I said, basically Paul starts out with this basic overall picture, the main truth of the passage, which is that we are in a war, and we've got to wake up to the reality that we're in a war, otherwise we're going to lose the war that we're in.

So many times the reason that Christians don't enjoy their Christian life, they keep losing the battle with their anger problems or their addiction problems, or fear and anxiety has overtaken their life, is because they have a peacetime mentality of, so long as I believe in Jesus and walk in holiness, then he's going to bless me and make me healthy and wealthy and all those things and that's not what the Bible actually teaches. The Bible teaches we are in a war and that life is hard and it's particularly hard for Christians.

So wake up to that reality and then the second thing he gives us are these battle strategies, ways of winning the war. And you could break it down under three big umbrellas. Number one, you've got to understand your enemy. Number two, you want to be strong in the Lord. He says that in this passage several different times, to stand strong in the Lord. And then

thirdly, to suit up in what he calls the armor of God. And when it comes to understanding the enemy, Paul[1] basically says, your enemy is not human.

We battle not against flesh and blood, but against these rulers and authorities and cosmic forces of darkness and spiritual forces of evil. So it's not a human that we're battling. Even though when we battle we do interact with flesh and blood, Paul would basically say that the animating force behind our flesh and blood problems are actually spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. And it's not just here and there, but it's actually everywhere. They're coming from the front and the back and the left and the right. It is a multifaceted kind of enemy that we are trying to oppose and resist, and that enemy is incredibly powerful, and so we can't do it in our own strength.

That's why we need to be strong in the Lord. If we try and battle in our own strength according to our own tools, we will fail. And so we need to be strong, and the way to be strong, according to the Apostle Paul, is to suit up in the armor of God. Things like the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness and shoes that are ready with the gospel, the shield of faith and so on and so forth. Last week we took a look at how the enemy fights and we looked at this little phrase in Ephesians chapter 6 that talks about the schemes of the devil.

And basically, if you want to understand how the devil works, his main goal is to tear apart what God wants to keep together. And he uses various different strategies to go about accomplishing that goal. And if you think about the armor of God as the positive side, the negative side of the armor would be the schemes of Satan. So he uses things like lies and deception instead of truth to tear apart what God wants to keep together. He uses temptation to sin instead of temptation towards righteousness to get us to fall from our joy in the Lord and our walk in righteousness.

He uses opposition and doubt and condemnation and shame and some of you know that because you're losing the battle against the devil in your own life right now. He's got you wrapped up in fear and anxiety. He's got you in deep depression because it's just opposition after opposition, failure after failure, some maybe living a lie right now, believing false things about yourself or false things about the Lord, and you can't seem to shake it. And those are how the enemy attacks us. He uses these various different schemes to try and tear apart what God wants to keep together.

And so the question this morning is if all of that's true, then how is it that we win this battle for our soul? How do we fight in such a way that we undo and overcome these various schemes of the devil? And the answer isn't what you may think it is. It's actually a little bit counterintuitive. According to the Apostle Paul in verses 11 and 13 and 14, the way that we win the battle is by standing, not by fighting, but by standing. You would think it would be by fighting.

You would think Paul would say, get out there and cast out demons and get the holy water and do all these supernatural exorcisms and you see Jesus do that in his ministry, and you see it in the book of Acts. But now we get here to Ephesians chapter 6, and Paul doesn't really mention any of that. He just says you need to stand firm in the Lord. He says it in verse 11, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

He says it again in verse 13, 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, he says it again in verse 14, stand therefore, and the reason why I believe Paul says our method of attack isn't offensive, but it is merely to take a posture of standing is because Jesus has ultimately already won the offensive victory that needed to be won, that on the cross Jesus accomplished the offensive strategy. And so we don't have to be on the offensive anymore.

Ultimately we are kind of like a football team that is starting the game 72 points ahead. We've already got that advantage with us. So our whole goal is to take such a strong defensive strategy that they don't score against us at all. And this is talked about by the Apostle Paul in another passage, another letter he wrote to a church in Colossae. He says in Colossians chapter 2 of the Christians there that you were dead in your trespasses and sins, but God made you alive together with him forgiving us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that was against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross, and then he gives us a little insight into how that impacts spiritual warfare. When he says that he disarmed, that Christ Jesus disarmed the rulers and authorities. The same people he talks about in Ephesians 6, the rulers and authorities, the cosmic powers, the spiritual forces of evil, he has disarmed them. And he has put them to open shame by triumphing over them in the cross. And so the offensive victory has already been won. All we have to do is stand strong in the position that was already given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

We just have to open up our eyes and awaken to the fact that the victory is already ours if we will but claim it and possess it and live in light of it. And so what the devil is really trying to do is to blind us of that reality. His goal is to keep you from really understanding the victory that is already yours in the Lord Jesus Christ. So his goal is to blind us to the spiritual blessings that we've already been given in the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul actually articulates this a little bit earlier in the book of Ephesians in Ephesians chapter 1, you have this prayer from the Apostle Paul.

You have another prayer in Ephesians chapter 3. And in both prayers his prayer is not that they would have strength to overcome the spiritual forces of evil and strength to overcome temptation and all these things, but rather the strength and the power to comprehend what was already theirs in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says in verse three, blessed be the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us. This is an aorist tense verb. It's something that has already happened. He already has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

Notice where it is. It's in the heavenly places. The heavenly places is the same place where the warfare is. So we battle against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. But what also is in the heavenly places? Every spiritual blessing has already been given to us in the heavenly places. And so you just need to wake up to that fact and stand firm in that truth. He prays in Ephesians chapter 3, not that they would have power to overcome, but rather that they would have power to comprehend. I'm praying that you would be rooted and grounded in love and have the strength to comprehend to understand with your mind, with all the saints, what is the breadth and the length and the height and the depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

That you may be filled with all the fullness of God. So it's already yours, it's already in you. I'm just praying that you would see it that you would understand it and that in understanding it you would have the resources necessary to stand firm in the Lord. So the game plan for winning, our offensive strategy, the MO for how we win this war, isn't by learning secret exorcisms or getting out the holy water or this or that or the other strategy. It's one thing, one strategy, and it is to stand firm in the Lord.

And the way that we stand firm in the Lord, according to the Apostle Paul, is by putting on this armor. And it's almost confusing to say, well, if the goal is to stand firm, then why do we got to do all these things, putting on all of this armor? And I said last week that maybe one of the best ways, a simple phrase to understand what it means to put on the armor of God is to think of putting on the armor of God as putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

To put on God's armor is to put on the Lord Jesus. And Paul actually basically says it just this way in another book that he wrote to another church. It was the church there in Rome. And he says in Romans chapter 13 to the church in Rome that they needed to put on the armor. The night is far gone, the day is at hand, so cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. And then he talks about getting rid of the darkness by not walking in things like orgies and drunkenness and sexual immorality and sensuality.

But then he re-explains what it means to put on the armor of light in verse 14 where he says put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. So putting on God's armor, putting on the armor of light is essentially the same thing as putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. And that sounds a little bit weird. I understand that. I mean, Jesus is in heaven. He's in a resurrected body. Are we supposed to wear some kind of Jesus suit, you know, like Halloween, supposed to dress up like Jesus for Halloween and every day of our life?

That sounds silly. So to put on Jesus doesn't mean to wear his flesh suit or to wear a bracelet that says WWJD and I'm going to be like Jesus was and talk like Jesus talked and perform miracles like Jesus did. I don't think that's exactly what he means. I think for the Apostle Paul, if we could get into his mind, when he says to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, it's another way of saying deeply believe or put a deep abiding trust in the truth of the gospel. To put on God's armor means to put on the Lord Jesus, and we put on the Lord Jesus through an abiding faith in the gospel.

And you see Paul talk this way, for example, in Galatians chapter 2 verse 20. He basically says this. He says, I've died, and Christ is in me. I'm in Jesus. He's in me. I've died to myself, the life I now live in the flesh. I live by faith in the gospel. Let's read it together. I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. So I've got Jesus in me. I'm putting on Christ. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith.

That's trusting language. That's believe the gospel language. What is the faith in? Faith in the Son of God. The Son of God who what? The Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Again, gospel language. So we put on Jesus, we put on the armor by believing deeply in the gospel. And the armor of God, the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes and the shield and all the things are just Paul's way of saying, put the gospel all over your body. Put the gospel on your head, the gospel on your feet, the gospel in your hands, the gospel across your chest.

The truth of the gospel around your waist, deeply believe in the gospel. And if you will, to the degree that you abide in the gospel and understand the gospel and apply the gospel to things like marriage and family and finances and career and church life to the degree that you embed yourself into those truths, it is to that degree that you're going to have the power to stand against the evil that you're fighting against on a day-by-day basis. The gospel, Paul says in Romans 1:16, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but it's not only the gospel that saves you from sin and gets you to heaven, it's the gospel that gets you through every moment in the Christian life, from point A to point Z.

The gospel is the power of God to reverse the corruption of sin in your life. The gospel is the power of God to heal your marriage. The gospel is the power of God to repel the forces of Satan and evil in your life. The gospel is the power of God. And so if you want to keep the corrupting influence of the enemy out of your life, then establish every part of your life in the gospel. And I know, again, that's kind of ethereal language, but this is what it means to live the Christian life.

It's to learn the truth that Jesus was God in the flesh who died for my sin, And three days later was raised from the dead, and if I will but trust in him for forgiveness of sin and surrender my life to his lordship, then all of these problems and difficulties that I'm facing in life, I'll have a new power and new resource with which to deal with those things. And the

reverse is also true: to whatever degree that you're not believing the gospel to whatever degree that you're not surrendered to the lordship of Christ and walking in his truth.

It is to that degree that you'll be open and susceptible to satanic attack and demonic influences. I don't really believe that Christians can be possessed by the devil necessarily in that way. But you can be influenced and experience great difficulty and great discouragement and depression and anxiety and fear and all those things. You will walk in that misery needlessly, because you don't have to if you would but open your eyes and believe, but you'll walk in it because you have not found a way to apply the truth of the gospel to those arenas of your life.

And I put in your notes if there's one thing that Satan wants to do in your life and in my life, if there's one thing he wants to do in this local church and you and in your family, he wants to put an end to your understanding of the gospel, your proper application of the truth of the gospel to your life. And I'm going to use the word amplification of the gospel, getting the gospel out, declaring the good news of the gospel, doing the work of evangelism. If there's anything that he wants to stop in this world, more than anything else, he wants to stop those things.

And I just want to give you a couple of examples. I know we've gone through a lot of Bible this morning, but earlier in Ephesians chapter 4, he talks about anger. Anger is the devil's cocaine. And he says, you need to be angry, but be angry and don't sin. Why? Because you'll give the devil an opportunity when you stay angry. What happens when you stay angry? It creates a spirit of unforgiveness, bitterness. That is anti-gospel. This is exactly the problem that the church in Corinth had when Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians chapter 5,[2] I believe, he says, you've got to let this guy back into the church.

You guys kicked him out of the church because you were properly angry over his sin. He was sleeping with his mother-in-law;[3] it's not a good thing. So they kicked him out of the church and said, You can't be proud of this and be a Christian at the same time. You've got to repent of this sin. And so it was a righteous good anger. But what had happened is that they had begun to sin in their anger. They created an unforgiving spirit. They said this sin is too great, too far, this is an unforgivable sin.

And so Paul writes to them and says you've got to forgive him, I've forgiven him, you now need to forgive him, otherwise you're going to be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs. So anger in your life is an anti-gospel spirit. And the devil wants to stop the advance of the gospel in your life by keeping you angry, keeping you bitter, keeping you frozen in your bitterness and unforgiveness. Another example is in Matthew chapter 16, when Peter is with Jesus and the other disciples, and Jesus says, who do men say that I am?

And Peter properly understands the gospel and says, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And then Jesus says, Yeah, that's right, Peter. And this was revealed to you not by man, but by God. And then Jesus preaches the gospel to Peter. He says, here's what's going to happen. Because I'm the Christ, I'm going to have to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes. I'm going to be killed. And on the third day, I'm going to rise again. Okay, that's basic gospel truth.

Then Peter took him aside and said, no way, Lord, far be it from you, this shall never happen to you. And what does Jesus say to him? He says, get away from me, Satan. Get behind me, Satan. The devil had infected Peter. How? By blinding him to the truth of the gospel. He says, get behind me, you're a hindrance to me, because you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. You've been infected with an anti-gospel spirit. And so that's what the devil wants to do to you.

He wants to take your mind off the truth of the gospel. Sometimes the gospel's not good news. Sometimes it's a reminder that things aren't going to go the way you want them to go, that the American dream is not all of that, that we cannot be saved by some human politician, that the main pleasure of life is not sexual pleasure and the best kind of relationship, but it is having our souls satisfied in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the gospel, and he wants to take your mind off that gospel so that you'll have in mind the things of man and not the things of God.

The last example I want to use is in 2 Timothy chapter 2. Basically Paul's writing to Timothy. Timothy, odd fact, is actually the pastor of the church in Ephesus. And so Paul's writing the book of Ephesians to the church in Ephesus. So Timothy probably would have been reading this letter. But Paul writes another letter to Timothy, kind of a pastoral epistle, a way of saying, here's how to pastor the church. And he tells Timothy, you've got to keep your focus on the gospel, be strengthened by the grace that is in the Lord Jesus.

Remind them of these things. He gives this beautiful summary of the gospel. And then he tells Timothy, avoid the quarreling. Avoid all this nonsense where people are trying to take your mind off of the simple truth of the gospel. And he mentions two people in particular, Hymenaeus and some other guy, and he says they're trying to upset the church by saying that the resurrection had already happened. And Timothy, you've got to resist getting caught up in those controversies. The Lord's servant cannot be quarrelsome. He needs to correct his opponents with gentleness, and then he says, God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth.

The truth of the what? The truth of the gospel. And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil. After being captured by him to do his will. So the devil captured Hymenaeus and this other guy to do his will. What was the will of Satan? It was to divert the church away from the truth of the gospel. And so Paul writes to Timothy and says,

you've got to address this, but you can't get caught up into the quarrels. You can't become sucked into the controversy, you've got to be a gospel pastor and correct your opponents with truth, but also with grace and gentleness.

And as you approach it in that way, who knows, they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil. Now I can show you so many other examples of the New Testament talking about the activity of Satan in the family, in the culture, and in the church, and his goal is to take our attention off the Lord Jesus Christ, to take our attention off of the truth of the gospel and to get us caught up in the things of man instead of the things of God. So how do we fight?

We fight by standing. And how do we stand? We stand strong by putting on the armor. What is the armor of God? It is the truth of the gospel. And so as we conclude, I just want to give you a bird's eye view of all of these elements of the armor of God, and I want to show you how they point to the gospel. He starts with the belt of truth. And the truth is not just truth in general. It's a truth about Jesus in particular. Jesus says in John 14:6, I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. He says a little bit earlier in John 8:31, if you abide in my word, you're truly my disciples and you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free. So the truth that we wear on the belt isn't just any kind of truth. It's not just philosophical capital-T Truth, although that's true, but the specific truth we need to know is the truth about Jesus. And when we come to discover the truth about Jesus, knowing that truth is what's going to hold everything else together.

Romans would wear a belt and it would basically have these different loops on it and it was the way of holding everything else on their body together. It would hold the breastplate. It would hold the sword. It would hold the Romans wore these long robes. They would tuck the robe up into their belt to try to run and fight and battle and do those things. Well, in a similar way, knowing the truth about Christ holds everything else together in your life. The Bible says that Jesus holds the universe together by the word of his power.

A proper Christian worldview begins and ends with the Lord Jesus. He is the author of creation, John 1. Everything that was created by Him, through Him, for Him. He is the end of creation. When he comes again, he'll recreate the universe. There'll be no sun or moon because the Lord Jesus will be the light. You can't make sense of what's wrong with the world without truth about Jesus. You can't make sense of how to fix the world outside of knowing the truth about Jesus, you can't make sense of how to be in right relationship with God without knowing the truth about Jesus.

The truth we need more than any other kind of truth is the truth about Jesus Christ. The second thing he mentions is the breastplate of righteousness, and we're not just talking

about a moral lifestyle when we talk about righteousness. Righteousness begins and ends with the Lord Jesus Christ. Righteousness, if you want to use a different way of thinking about it, ultimately means being in right relationship. People try to attain righteousness various different ways. Some people think I'll only be right, I'll only be whole if I marry that person or if I'm accepted by these kinds of people.

Or if I make this amount of money, so they use success in work or in relationships as a way to fill the gap between who they are and who they know they need to be. The righteousness is found in that. Some people use substances, some people use other things. But for the Christian, our righteousness is in nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Think of righteousness as the end of striving and the beginning of rest. It's this: I'm okay. And for the Christian, that is only found in Jesus. He is our righteousness.

We put on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our identity. He is the one who fills the gap between who we are and who we know we need to be. He's the one that puts us at rest. And that's what Paul is saying. We need to put on that armor. We need to remind ourselves of that truth. The next thing he mentions are shoes, shoes that are made ready with the gospel of peace. For the Roman soldier, his shoes had cleats in them. You know, you might wear cleats for a football game or whatever.

And the same is true for the armor of God. The shoes of the gospel keep us from slipping. You've heard about a backslidden Christian. You backslide as a Christian when you forget the gospel, when you begin to think the things of man instead of the things of God. You do it your own way instead of the Lord's way. You think, I can save my own life if I'll just do X, Y, and Z. You've slipped. So you need to remind yourself of the gospel on a day-by-day basis. He says it's the gospel of peace, so he's the one that gives us peace with God.

Not only the peace of God in our heart that keeps us from anxiety and fear, but peace with God. Because we were once in enmity with God, but because of the gospel, the enmity has been removed through faith in Jesus Christ. The next three elements he mentions are the shield and the helmet and the sword. And it's interesting Paul actually shifts in his verb tenses. The first ones he says to have. You have the belt of truth, you have the breastplate of righteousness, you have shoes, but then he shifts in the verb and he says, now you've got to take.

So these are parts of the armor that you don't maybe use on an everyday basis where you have them all the time. These are things you take up as the opportunity presents itself. And the first one is the shield of faith. And so the way to think about the shield of faith in terms of how it applies to the gospel is faith is putting into action what you know the truth to be. You know the truth, it's in you, it's always in you. If you're abiding in the word. But sometimes it's not enough just to know the truth up here.

You've got to act on the truth. And so we take up the shield of faith when we act on God's truth. It doesn't prevent the arrows, but it does protect us from harm. It's not going to keep tragedy from happening, but it is going to enable you to persevere through the sufferings and difficulties of life because you're going to put the truth into action. You're going to say, even though it doesn't make sense, even though I don't have all my questions answered, I'm going to walk by faith, even though I can't see, and that's going to protect you from the hardships that you're facing.

He talks about the helmet of salvation. I think of this as like a football helmet. A football helmet was given to you to absorb the shock of the blows that you're going to face in the same way the helmet of salvation absorbs the shock of Satan's blows, keeps our minds on Christ instead of our circumstances. It's about what you remember. It's about where your mind is at when you're in the valley. When you're experiencing opposition and hardship, instead of focusing on your circumstances or focusing on yourself or focusing on what's wrong with the world, you instead remind yourself that I am in Christ, He is in me.

He is for me, not against me. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died. It is God who justifies. You fix your mindset by wearing the helmet of salvation. So when the blows come, you put on the helmet. And remind yourself of who you are in Christ. And then this last one about the sword. I didn't know this until this week. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God, but it's not a logos word. Sometimes we use the word like we think about the Bible, the 66 books of the Bible.

And you might think of this as logos, the complete Word of God, capital-T Truth. But this is not necessarily talking about logos. It's the Greek word rhema, which means a specific word from the Lord. A specific word at a specific time to a specific person for a specific circumstance. So you can think of this sermon as a rhema from the Lord. It's a particular word from God for you for today. I think of the weekly sermon as God's word to our congregation for this week. And the sword of the Spirit is your ability to hear that word.

What is God saying to me? Not only do I hear it, but do I understand it and am I willing to apply it? Not just to hear the word, but to put it into practice. That's what it means to take the truth of the gospel and not just believe it up here. I'm a sinner and I need salvation, but to bring it inside and to have your life animated by the truth of that gospel. And so the word of the Lord for us today, his rhema, is to stand strong. Not to get out and cast out demons, but to stand strong in the Lord, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ by having an abiding faith and confidence in the gospel.

And if you're watching this and you're not a Christian, this is how you become a Christian. You become a Christian by realizing I can't do this in my own power. I cannot save myself. I can only be saved through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you'll repent of your sin and repent of your self-sufficiency and self-salvation mode and cast yourself on the

mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And the way you enter into the Christian life is the way that you fight throughout the Christian life.

It's day by day, every morning waking up, putting on the armor, reminding yourself it's not about me, it's all about him. It's not about my hopes and dreams, it's about his lordship in my life, it's not about my agenda, it's about his agenda, and so I'm going to live as though Christ lives in me. The life I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. And if you're watching this and you're already a Christian, then this morning it's a reminder for us that if we are going to have any chance of standing strong against the opposition that's coming our way, of not having our minds brainwashed and influenced by the demonic activity that's in our culture and in our church and in our families.

It's by reminding ourselves of the truth of the gospel, standing strong in the Lord Jesus Christ, recommitting ourselves to our first love, our love for the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in him in all of our ways, not leaning on our own understanding, but acknowledging Him in each and every step. And so I don't know what that looks like in your particular life, but as we close out this time, as the band plays and leads us, I want to challenge you to do business with the Lord. And if there's a decision you want to make public, if you want to reach out to us, then please text our phone number, 325-692-2360, and we'll walk with you on whatever your next step may be.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for this time in the Word, and we pray that we would be able to stand in the evil day. For some of us, the evil day is today. We are experiencing all kinds of hardship and suffering in our life and it feels like we just need to give up. What were we thinking, thinking that this was the right path? And so help us to stand strong in the gospel. We pray that these words that we've just read and sought to understand, that you would open up our eyes to understand them.

Help us to see how deep and wide and long and high your love for us actually is. And help us to have the wisdom to know how the truth of the gospel and the truth about Christ is transformative and truly is the power for how to overcome these challenges that we're facing. And so for each and every person, I pray your spirit be at work in this time, helping us to know what to do and having the courage and faith to do it. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Satan basically says"; the statement that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood" is Paul's. Source: Ephesians 6:12 (ESV). ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "2 Corinthians chapter 5"; Paul's call to forgive and restore the disciplined man, "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan," is in 2 Corinthians 2:5–11. Source: 2 Corinthians 2:5–11 (ESV). ↩

3. Transcript note: spoken as "his mother-in-law"; the sin Paul addressed in Corinth was that "a man has his father's wife." Source: 1 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV). ↩