

**(Theme Slide)**



2

**Some days are memorable because they are filled with laughter and glitter, like the closing moments of last week's youth fundraiser.**

**TR: But everyday is a day we must be . . .**



3

**. . . built up as warriors for God's Kingdom.**

**-- The climactic concluding section of challenge in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians is all about helping us all realize that "all the world's a stage" . . . actually, "all the world's a battleground."**

**TR: In light of all that God has done for us in Christ, we are challenged . . .**

**Ephesians 6:10** *page 1082 in handout Bibles*

**Finally, be strong in the Lord  
and in the strength of his might.**

*ESV*

4

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: This would remind folks familiar with the Old Testament texts of the word to Joshua . . .**



5

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: My hope today is to stir our youth and all of us to be . . .**



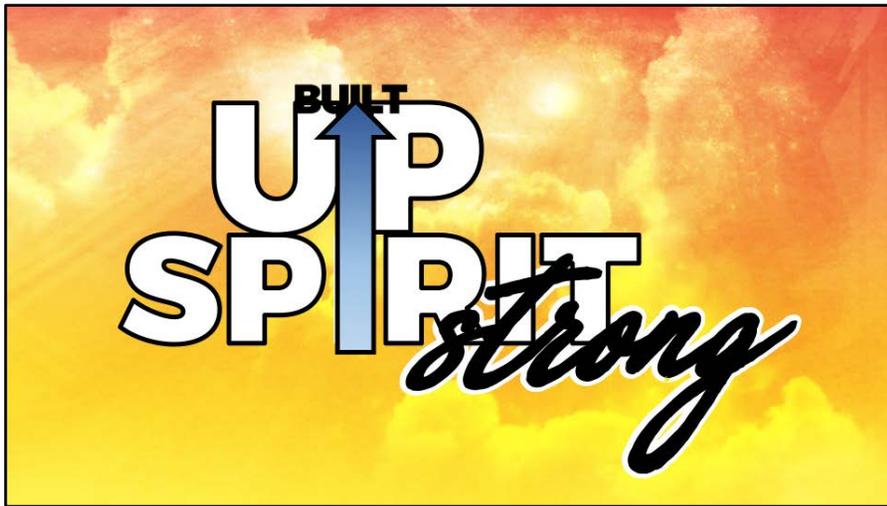
6

## READ SLIDE

- Perhaps you've heard of "Boston Strong" as a response to the marathon bombing.
- Or other locations or names tied to the word STRONG.
- Today, since we are being challenged to be strong in the strength of God's might, what we want is to be SPIRIT strong.

TR: In light of our new three-year vision, we want to help us be . .

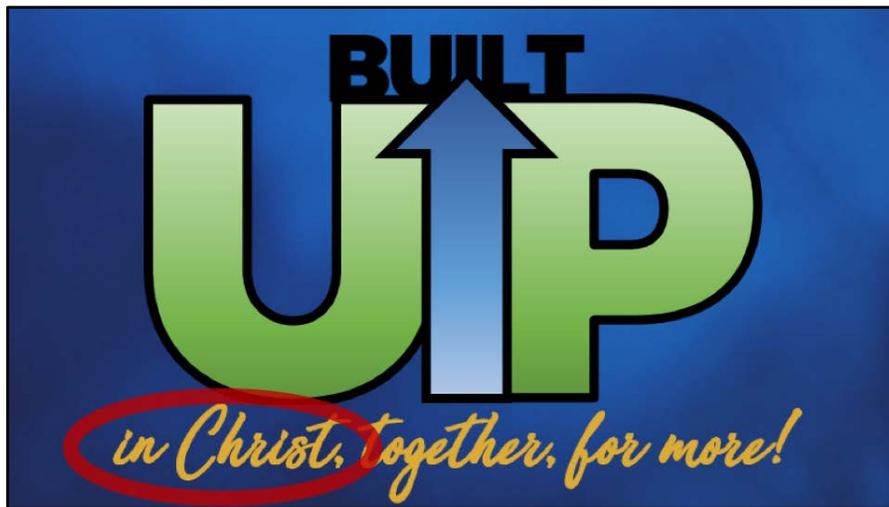
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7

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Since we are to be “strong in the Lord”, it is clear that our 3-year vision lines up with our passage since we want to be . . .**



8

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: One of the challenges for us is that we find it much easier to be motivated by a “glittering” event, than the sometimes “grinding” preparation for battle.**



9

**Our passage today spurs us on by reminding us that . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Look at the text in Ephesians 6**

**Ephesians 6:11-12**

**Put on** the whole armor of God, **that** you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>**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.

*ESV*

10

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 13**

**Ephesians 6:13**

**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 firm.

*ESV*

11

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The battle we face as believers in this world is hard . . .**

## THE BATTLE IS HARD



*The devil has schemes*

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

12

because the devil has schemes to take us down.  
-- His strategies are cunning and crafty. He is trying to outwit us, especially when it comes to not forgiving a repentant brother or sister in Christ, as Paul tells the Corinthians (2 Cor 2:11).

TR: The battle is beyond mere human capabilities because . . .

## THE BATTLE IS HARD



*The devil has schemes*



*Spiritual forces of evil wrestle  
against us*

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

13

### READ SLIDE

- Wrestling was popular in western Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) and Paul uses the imagery to portray in-your-face hand-to-hand combat.
- Even in our conflicts today, we usually think and act like the problem is just the other person(s).
- But there are hierarchies of demonic forces that hate God and want nothing more than to hurt those whom He loves.
- There is a present darkness.
- There is a real evil in this world and in the spiritual realms.

TR: Remember earlier in Ephesians . . .

**Ephesians 1:20-21**

. . . that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>**far above all rule and authority and power and dominion,** and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

*ESV*

14

**. . . Paul is praying that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened to see the great power that is towards us who believe . . . the same power . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Christ is seated above all these powers, authorities, spiritual forces.**

**-- In chapter 2 we read that we are “seated with Christ.”**

**-- Therefore, we too are “over” these forces . . . but only IN CHRIST.**

**TR: To get ready to be true kingdom warriors, we must realize that . . .**

## THE BATTLE IS HARD



*The devil has schemes*



*Powerful spiritual forces of evil  
wrestle against us*



*The day(s) are evil*

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

15

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: In the previous chapter we read . . .**

**Ephesians 5:15-16**

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the best use of the time, **because the days are evil.**

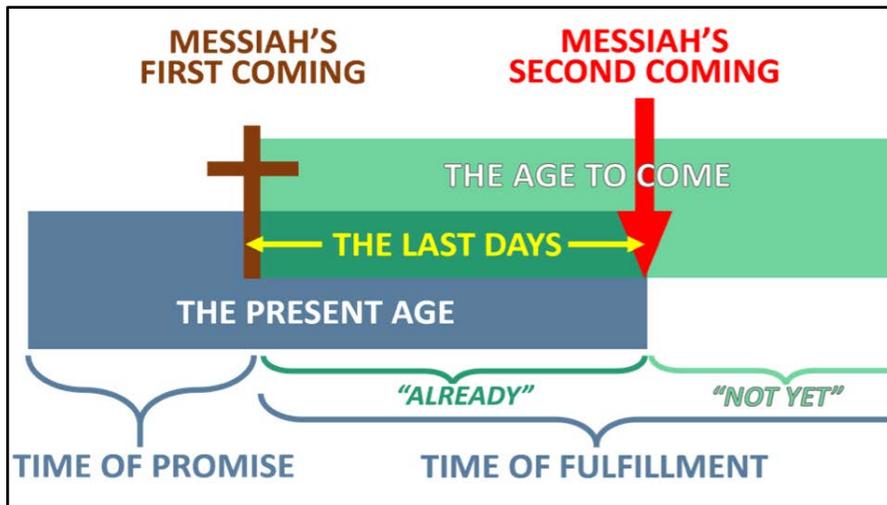
*ESV*

16

**READ SLIDE**

-- In chapter 6 it says "DAY" – could be referring to a specific day, or especially hard days, or to a range of time.

**TR: What is clear is that we are living in the overlap zone.**



17

**We are in the present age that is still a time of darkness, though the light of Christ is shining.**

**-- We are people of THE AGE TO COME who live in THE LAST DAYS.**

**-- The victory has been won for us in Christ, but we must appropriate that victory every day.**

**-- "Who we are . . . we must be!"**

**TR: If we are going to prepare ourselves as kingdom warriors, we must realize the battle is HARD . . . and the enemy is fierce.**



18

**Statements like these have been attributed to various military leaders . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Peter tells us that the devil is prowling like a lion, seeking someone to devour.**

**TR: The battle is hard . . . so . . .**



19

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: It is this armor that will help us to take a stand, like Shammah  
...**

**2 Samuel 23:11-12**

And next to him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines gathered together at Lehi, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the men fled from the Philistines. <sup>12</sup>But **he took his stand** in the midst of the plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines, and the Lord worked a great victory.

*ESV*

20

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: I hope you didn't miss the emphasis on not giving ground to the Evil forces . . .**

**THE BATTLE IS HARD**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

*So we can ...*

- **STAND AGAINST** the schemes
- **WITHSTAND** in the evil day
- *having done all, to **STAND FIRM***

21

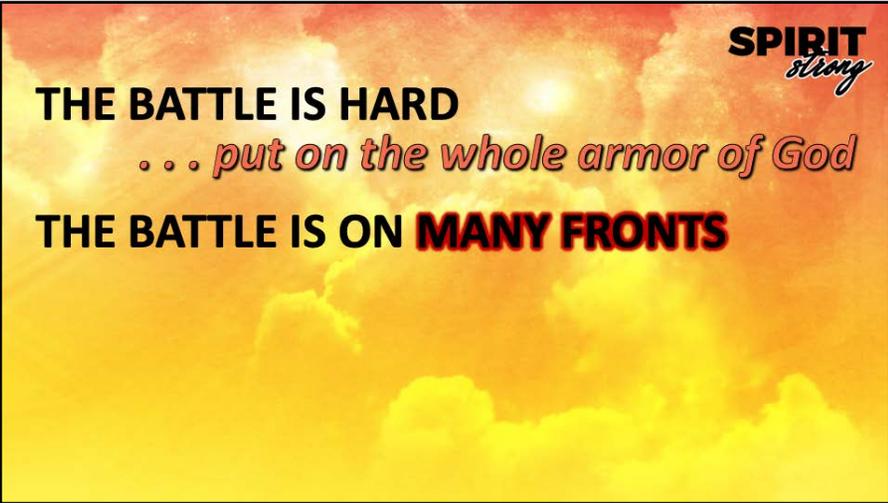
**We are to put on the whole armor of God so we can ... READ SLIDE**

-- The ground we stand on has been won by our Lord Jesus. The cosmic forces have no rights to it.

-- Yet we can give in to their schemes by ignorance or fatigue.

-- Even as we want our young people to know ... God is good ... but **THE BATTLE IS HARD.**

**TR: I'm motivated to become a kingdom warrior when God's Spirit opens my eyes to the reality that ...**



**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

**THE BATTLE IS HARD**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS ON **MANY FRONTS****

22

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Beginning at verse 14**

**Ephesians 6:14-15**

**Stand therefore,** having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

*ESV*

23

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 16**

**Ephesians 6:16-17**

In all circumstances **take up** the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup>and **take** the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

*ESV*

24

**READ SLIDE**

-- The PUT ON language is continued with related concepts like TAKE and TAKE UP.

**TR: The Evil One and his minions attack on many fronts. So we need to be dressed for battle. It is likely that Paul is using a Roman Soldier as a visual aid. Though many of these images of armor come from the book of Isaiah.**

**THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS**



*Belt of Truth*

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

25

**There is the belt of truth, likely the leather girdle under the armor.**

**TR: We need this because the devil is . . .**



26

... a liar. Elsewhere he is called “the father of lies.”  
-- Even as he twisted what God said when he tempted Eve in the Garden, he will seek to lead us away from faithfulness to God with deceptions and distortions.

TR: We need the ...

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS

- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*



**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

27

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Because the enemy goes after our hearts . . .**

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS

- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*

**GUILT & SHAME**



**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

28

... as the accuser of the brethren, he seeks to stick in the shive of guilt and shame.

-- Don't you struggle after you have fallen into sin with thinking, "I can't go back to Jesus until I clean this up."

-- But we weren't saved by works and we can be restored by works . . . we can't win this by ourselves . . . we must turn to Jesus.

TR: We need the . . .

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*
- *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

29

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Because the battle is often fought on the front of relational . .**

•

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*
- *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*

**DIVISION**

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

30

... division.

-- The GOSPEL OF PEACE in Ephesians is the good news of Jesus being our peace, making peace with God AND with each other.

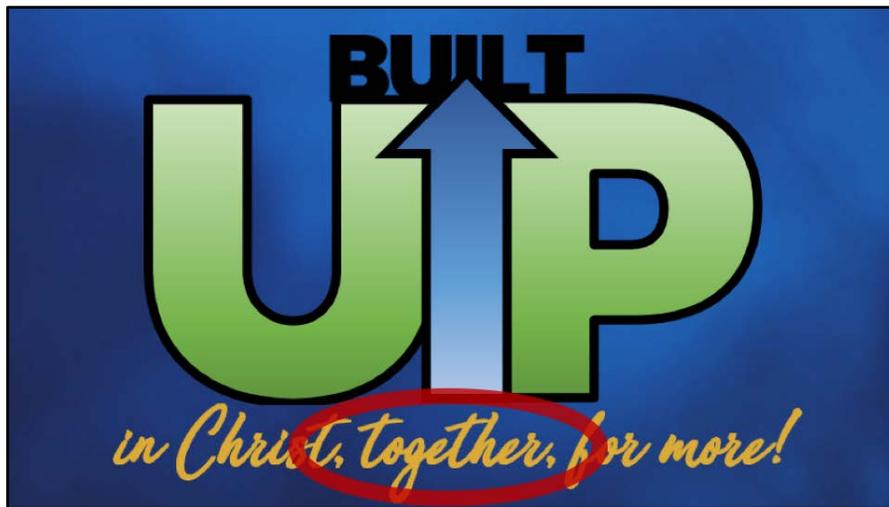
-- Remember, the mystery was that the one new humanity, the one new man that Jesus creates, is made up of Jew and Gentile believers.

-- We too often minimize the importance of our feet. But if I can take away your footwear, I can probably defeat you. It is true in many sports and in battle.

-- We are rendered ineffective for the kingdom by our unwillingness to put on the sandals of the gospel of peace.

-- We hobble around saying we want others to come to faith, but the evil forces maneuver around us with ease because of the relational conflicts and divisions we have not really dealt with.

TR: Our three-year vision not only connects to the fact that we must be strong in HIS might, we also need to be built up ...



31

**... TOGETHER.**

**-- One of the great battle strategies of the Romans was to fight as a unit. To lock their shields together and to work together as one.**

**TR: The battle is on many fronts, so we need to take up . . .**

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*
- *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*
- *Shield of Faith*

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

32

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Because the evil forces want to fill us with . . .**

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
  - *Breastplate of Righteousness*
  - *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*
  - *Shield of Faith*
- DISTRUST**

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

33

. . . doubt and distrust.

-- The roman soldier had two shields available. A smaller circular one. Or the one Paul is referring to . . . a door-like huge shield.

-- These shields were covered with leather that would be soaked with water before a battle.

-- When the enemy would shoot arrows dipped in pitch that was then lit, the water-logged leather would put out the flame.

-- In the midst of the overlap zone, when we **ALREADY** have so much of God's promises fulfilled . . . and still there is so much that is **NOT YET**, it is easy to fall into distrusting God.

-- When we distrust God, we start to lose our hope. Paul taught us to pray that the eyes of our hearts would be open and see the hope of our calling.

-- If the evil one can get us through these fiery darts to doubt God, he will take the promised ground from underneath us.

-- EX: struggling with **EXPECTATIONS**.

-- EX: "yeah, yeah, but what has God done for me lately?"

-- Will we **TRUST** that God is at work when I don't feel it and don't see it?

**TR: Related to this, we need to put on . . .**

**33**

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*
- *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*
- *Shield of Faith*
- *Helmet of Salvation*

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

34

### READ SLIDE

**TR: Because the evil one wants us to only hope for things like a sunny day or warmer weather or a better night's sleep.**

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*
- *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*
- *Shield of Faith*
- *Helmet of Salvation*

**HOPELESSNESS**

**SPIRIT**  
*strong*

35

The cosmic forces know their time is limited and out of an evil spite they want us to become as hopeless as they are.

-- They want us to forget all that God has given us in Christ.

-- There are lots of lies about salvation: "I deserve it." "I earned it." "I don't need it." "I can't be saved."

-- But the biggest lie of all is that "I'm not loved."

TR: Warriors who know they are living in the last days guard their minds by setting their minds on things above. By renewing their minds as they put off and put on in the Christ-changed life.

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*
- *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*
- *Shield of Faith*
- *Helmet of Salvation*
- *Sword of the Spirit –  
Word of God*

36

**Kingdom warriors take up the offensive weapon of the . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- The shield could be used to attack as well, but the primary weapon was this shorter sword.**

**-- Clear Paul has brutal, hand-to-hand conflict in mind.**

**TR: We must take up the sword and not be satisfied with our . . .**

## THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS



- *Belt of Truth*
- *Breastplate of Righteousness*
- *Shoes of the Gospel of Peace*
- *Shield of Faith*
- *Helmet of Salvation*
- *Sword of the Spirit* **-OPINIONS**  
*Word of God*

37

. . .opinions.

-- Like the belt of truth and helmet of salvation, we need to **KNOW THAT WE KNOW** what God has revealed to us.

-- We don't want to make absolute what God doesn't make absolute, but we also don't want to ignore what He has made clear.

-- All of the pieces of the armor are related to truth . . . that's why we are having you learn the Pathways Bible Study Method . . . if you are to prevail, to advance and storm the gates of hell, it will be necessary for you to handle with Word of God correctly.

TR: The pieces of the armor remind us that the battle is on **MANY FRONTS**, so we must . . .

**THE BATTLE IS HARD**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

38

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Like a climactic scene from a Lord of the Rings movie . . .**



39

**. . . we are surrounded by enemies that are far stronger than we are.**

**TR: The only way we will win is through our king**



40

**. . . who has already won the victory.**

**TR: The danger with a book/movie reference or even a historical reference, we can imagine the battle was then or out there somewhere. But we must be built up to be SPIRIT STRONG because . . .**

**THE BATTLE IS HARD**

*. . . put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS**

*. . . put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS **TODAY****

**READ SLIDE . . . it is here, now!**

**TR: The ESV translation makes the next section part of the one we just looked at, but I think it may be referring to the dressing room in which we put on the armor.**

**Ephesians 6:18**

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,

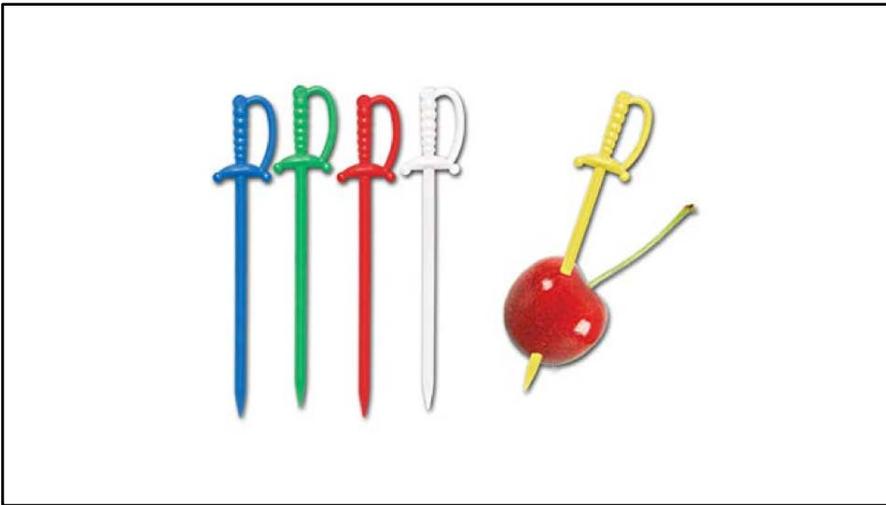
*ESV*

42

**Verse 18 says . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Keeping alert is so hard. Maintaining a state of readiness is so hard. The daily disciplines of the Word and Prayer are often ignored by us.**

**TR: It doesn't seem to cause too many problems until we find that we reach for our scabbard and instead of pulling out a power, two-edged sword, we put out . . .**



43

... a toothpick.

**TR: We are called to a state of readiness, alertness, elsewhere called “sober thinking.” The battle is today so we must . . .**

**THE BATTLE IS HARD**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS TODAY**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

**READ SLIDE**

-- I underline that the armor is of God because verse 18 is all about prayer.

TR: You could say, "It is ALL about prayer" . . .

**Ephesians 6:18**

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,

*ESV*

45

**Notice that four times we read the word all . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: WE must put on the whole armor of God . . .**

**THE BATTLE IS HARD**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS ON MANY FRONTS**

*... put on the whole armor of God*

**THE BATTLE IS TODAY**

*... put on the whole armor of God  
with ALL prayer*

46

**... with ALL prayer.**

**TR: While moments on stage with glittering confetti falling on you is fun, the call of a warrior is usually much more mundane.**



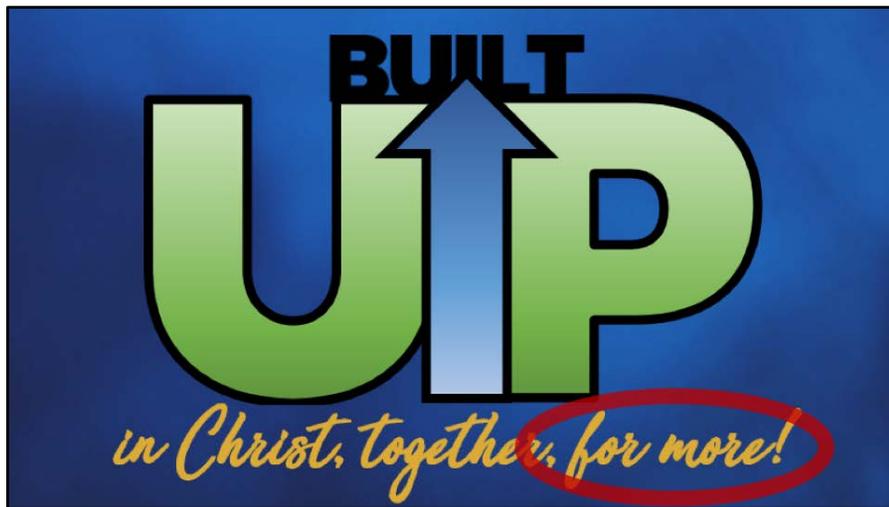
47

**To be built up SPIRIT strong, will require us to become men and women of prayer.**

**-- What will it take for us to perceive “this present darkness” so that we will understand “prayer matters!”**

**-- How easy to say that we don’t have time . . . except everyone of us has time to put on our coats when we perceive that the weather outside is dangerous.**

**TR: As we relate this battle preparation talk to our three-year vision, we might think that the last aspect is not included.**



48

**We are seeking to be built up in Christ, together, AND FOR MORE.**

**TR: I believe this call to the dressing room of prayer to put on our armor has just this focus. Look at verse 19.**

**Ephesians 6:19-20**

. . . and also for me, that words may be given to me in **opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,**<sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may **declare it boldly,** as I ought to speak.

*ESV*

49

**With ALL prayer . . . pray . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Paul's imprisonment could easily be used by the evil forces to attack his soul, seeking to make him doubt God's plan, God's goodness, God's reality.**

**-- But Paul has put on the armor . . . he knows the battle is hard, on many fronts, and that it is on . . . everyday.**

**-- His requests is that he would fulfill the commission given to him . . . that he would be bold in declaring the mystery of the Gospel.**

**TR: May the Spirit help us to put on the whole armor of God so that we can . . .**

## → BOLDLY STAND!

50

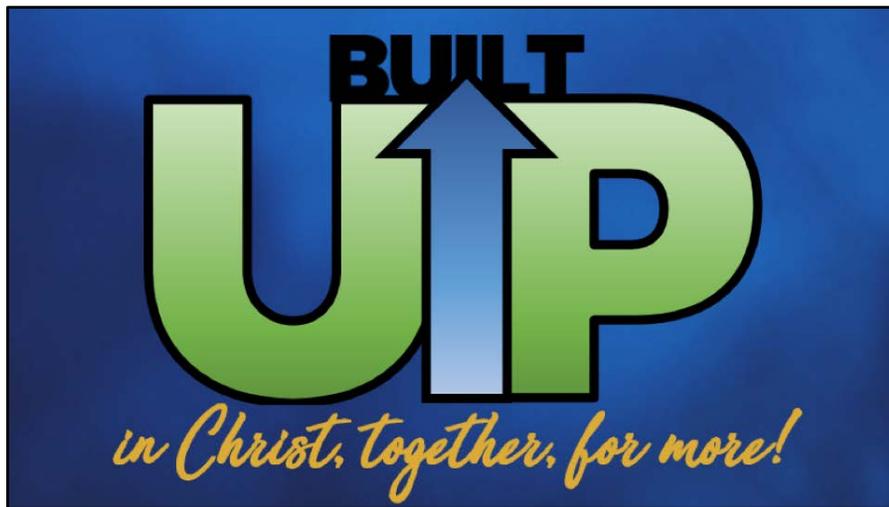
### **READ SLIDE**

-- EX: I've added to my daily prayer list . . . an opportunity to be Gospel-fluent.

-- Contra that most of our prayers are for health, wealth, fun, our plans to work . . . when we ALL have been given a commission to be SPIRIT strong as warriors of Christ Kingdom . . .

-- . . . not fighting against flesh and blood, whether with physical or verbal violence, but against the true oppressors who enslave people . . . sin, the world, the devil.

TR: Let us give thanks to God for the moments of glittering spotlight . . . but let us also be willing to get off the stage and into shadows and become people who put on the whole armor of God in prayer.



51

**If that happens, the vision God has given us for these next three years will become a reality . . . READ SLIDE .**