



## Silverdale Baptist

THE INVISIBLE BATTLE ~ WE ARE AT WAR ~ EPHESIANS 6:10-18 ~ 07/08-09/2023

### Big Idea

As Christians, we are in an invisible battle. In Ephesians 6, Paul opens our eyes to the fight, shows us who is fighting for us, and teaches us how to prepare.

### Getting Started

During WW2, the US created a Ghost Army to deceive the German forces. The army included inflatable rubber tanks, speakers broadcasting pre-recorded tank noises, and fake artillery pieces. The Ghost Army drew enemy fire away from Allied forces and confused the Germans regarding the actual location of the Allied army. Just before D-Day, the Ghost Army even fooled the Germans into believing Gen. Patton was preparing to invade a different area!

**Discuss a time you believed a lie, and it caused you trouble.**

We are in an invisible war. The enemy deceives and distracts us from understanding the war. However, the Bible opens our eyes to the war and the enemy's tactics. In this first message of The Invisible Battle, Pastor Tony helps us understand from Ephesians 6 that we are at war!

### Learn

You're in a battle that you can't see.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 6:10-12.

**What are we commanded to do in this passage, and why?**

**Who are we at war with?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 PETER 5:8.

**How is Satan described?**

Lions use ambush and sneak attacks to capture their prey. They focus on the weaker animals who are slower and on the fringes of the herd. Likewise, Satan attacks the vulnerable. What do we need to know to be ready for the battle?

You're in a battle you can't win on your own.

**According to verses 10-12, whose help do we need to fight this war?**

**Whose armor do we put on?**

You're in a battle, so you must prepare.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPH 6:13-18.

**Discuss the armor.**

**What does the text say about each piece?**

**What is each piece's purpose?**

1. The belt of truth
2. The breastplate of righteousness
3. The shoes of the gospel of peace
4. The shield of faith
5. The Helmet of Salvation
6. The sword of the Spirit

You fight your battles through prayer.

**Since our war is spiritual, how do we fight our battles?**

WW2 was a physical war against a physical enemy. However, behind the war, there was a demonic presence at work. We may face someone we believe to be the enemy, but there is a spiritual force behind the physical presence. The real enemy is the devil, Satan himself. We are in an invisible battle, and the danger is real.

## Apply

*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. Eph 6:12*

**What difference should being aware of the armor of God have in your responses to life's problems this week? For example, how will being reminded that you are wearing the breastplate of righteousness help you guard your heart when you are tempted?**

**What difference does this study make in your life?**

**What difference does it make that our battle is not against flesh and blood?**

**What should our response be when we have a problem with someone, and the battle is spiritual, not physical?**

*When all I see is the battle, You see my victory  
When all I see is the mountain, You see a mountain moved  
And as I walk through the shadow, Your love surrounds me  
There's nothing to fear now, for I am safe with You  
So when I fight, I'll fight on my knees  
With my hands lifted high –  
The Battle Belongs by Phil Wickham and Brian Johnson*

## Pray

Father, we know we are in an invisible battle, an unseen war. Help us see the world around us with spiritual eyes. Open our eyes to the real war and the real enemy. Remind us daily that people are not our enemies. Teach us to be mindful of our armor and teach us to fight on our knees.

May Your name be glorified in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Dig Deeper

### **The Enemy (Eph. 6:10–12)**

The intelligence corps plays a vital part in warfare because it enables the officers to know and understand the enemy. Unless we know who the enemy is, where he is, and what he can do, we have a difficult time

defeating him. Not only in Ephesians 6, but throughout the entire Bible, God instructs us about the enemy, so there is no reason for us to be caught off guard.

**The leader—the devil.** The enemy has many different names. *Devil* means “accuser,” because he accuses God’s people day and night before the throne of God (Rev. 12:7–11). *Satan* means “adversary,” because he is the enemy of God. He is also called the tempter (Matt. 4:3), and the murderer and the liar (John 8:44). He is compared to a lion (1 Peter 5:8), a serpent (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9), and an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13–15), as well as “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4, NIV).

Where did he come from, this spirit-creature that seeks to oppose God and defeat His work? Many students believe that in the original Creation, he was “Lucifer, son of the morning” (Isa. 14:12–15) and that he was cast down because of his pride and his desire to occupy God’s throne. Many mysteries are connected with the origin of Satan, but what he is doing and where he is going are certainly no mystery! Since he is a created being, and not eternal (as God is), he is limited in his knowledge and activity. Unlike God, Satan is not all-knowing, all-powerful, or everywhere-present. Then how does he accomplish so much in so many different parts of the world? The answer is in his organized helpers.

**Satan’s helpers.** Paul called them “principalities ... powers ... rulers ... spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). Charles B. Williams translates it: “For our contest is not with human foes alone, but with the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark world; that is, with the spirit forces of evil challenging us in the heavenly contest” (WMS). This suggests a definite army of demonic creatures that assist Satan in his attacks against believers. The Apostle John hinted that one third of the angels fell with Satan when he rebelled against God (Rev. 12:4), and Daniel wrote that Satan’s angels struggle against God’s angels for control of the affairs of nations (Dan. 10:13–20). A spiritual battle is going on in this world, and in the sphere of “the heavenlies,” and you and I are a part of this battle. Knowing this makes “walking in victory” a vitally important thing to us—and to God.

The important point is that our battle is not against human beings. It is against spiritual powers. We are wasting our time fighting people when we ought to be fighting the devil who seeks to control people and make them oppose the work of God. During Paul’s ministry in Ephesus, a riot took place that could have destroyed the church (Acts 19:21–41). It wasn’t caused only by Demetrius and his associates, for behind them were Satan and his associates. Certainly Paul and the church prayed, and the opposition was silenced. The advice of the King of Syria to his soldiers can be applied to our spiritual battle: “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king” (1 Kings 22:31).

**Satan’s abilities.** The admonitions Paul gave indicate that Satan is a strong enemy (Eph. 6:10–12), and that we need the power of God to be able to stand against him. Never underestimate the power of the devil. He is not compared to a lion and a dragon just for fun! The Book of Job tells what his power can do to a man’s body, home, wealth, and friends. Jesus calls Satan a thief who comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10). Not only is Satan strong, but he is also wise and subtle, and we fight against “the wiles of the devil.” *Wiles* means “cunning, crafty arts, strategems.” The Christian cannot afford to be “ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). Some men are cunning and crafty and “lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14), but behind them is the arch-deceiver, Satan. He masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) and seeks to blind men’s minds to the truth of God’s Word. The fact that Paul uses the word “wrestle” indicates that we are involved in a hand-to-hand battle and are not mere spectators at a game. Satan wants to use our external enemy, the world, and our internal enemy, the flesh, to defeat us. His weapons and battle plans are formidable.

## **The Equipment (Eph. 6:13–17)**

Since we are fighting against enemies in the spirit world, we need special equipment both for offense and defense. God has provided the “whole armor” for us, and we dare not omit any part. Satan looks for that unguarded area where he can get a beachhead (Eph. 4:27). Paul commanded his readers to put on the armor, take the weapons, and withstand Satan, all of which we do by faith. Knowing that Christ has already conquered Satan, and that the spiritual armor and weapons are available, by faith we accept what God gives us and go out to meet the foe. The day is evil, and the enemy is evil, but “if God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31)

**The girdle of truth (v. 14a).** Satan is a liar (John 8:44), but the believer whose life is controlled by truth will defeat him. The girdle holds the other parts of the armor together, and truth is the integrating force in the life of the victorious Christian. A man of integrity, with a clear conscience, can face the enemy without fear. The girdle also held the sword. Unless we practice the truth, we cannot use the Word of truth. Once a lie gets into the life of a believer, everything begins to fall apart. For over a year, King David lied about his sin with Bathsheba, and nothing went right. Psalms 32 and 51 tell of the price he paid.

**The breastplate of righteousness (v. 14b.)** This piece of armor, made of metal plates or chains, covered the body from the neck to the waist, both front and back. It symbolizes the believer’s righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21) as well as his righteous life in Christ (Eph. 4:24). Satan is the accuser, but he cannot accuse the believer who is living a godly life in the power of the Spirit. The life we live either fortifies us against Satan’s attacks or makes it easier for him to defeat us (2 Cor. 6:1–10). When Satan accuses the Christian, it is the righteousness of Christ that assures the believer of his salvation. But our positional righteousness in Christ, without practical righteousness in the daily life, only gives Satan opportunity to attack us.

**The shoes of the Gospel (v. 15).** The Roman soldier wore sandals with hobnails in the soles to give him better footing for the battle. If we are going to “stand” and “withstand,” then we need the shoes of the Gospel. Because we have the peace with God (Rom. 5:1) that comes from the Gospel, we need not fear the attack of Satan or men. We must be at peace with God and with each other if we are to defeat the devil (James 4:1–7). But the shoes have another meaning. We must be prepared each day to share the Gospel of peace with a lost world. The most victorious Christian is a witnessing Christian. If we wear the shoes of the Gospel, then we have the “beautiful feet” mentioned in Isaiah 52:7 and Romans 10:15. Satan has declared war, but you and I are ambassadors of peace (2 Cor. 5:18–21); and, as such, we take the Gospel of peace wherever we go.

**The shield of faith (v. 16).** The shield was large, usually about four feet by two feet, made of wood, and covered with tough leather. As the soldier held it before him, it protected him from spears, arrows, and “fiery darts.” The edges of these shields were so constructed that an entire line of soldiers could interlock shields and march into the enemy like a solid wall. This suggests that we Christians are not in the battle alone. The “faith” mentioned here is not saving faith, but rather living faith, a trust in the promises and the power of God. Faith is a defensive weapon which protects us from Satan’s fiery darts. In Paul’s day, arrows, dipped in some inflammable substance and ignited, were shot at the enemy. Satan shoots “fiery darts” at our hearts and minds: lies, blasphemous thoughts, hateful thoughts about others, doubts, and burning desires for sin. If we do not by faith quench these darts, they will light a fire within and we will disobey God. We never know when Satan will shoot a dart at us, so we must always walk by faith and use the shield of faith.

**The helmet of salvation (v. 17).** Satan wants to attack the mind, the way he defeated Eve (Gen. 3; 2 Cor. 11:1–3). The helmet refers to the mind controlled by God. It is too bad that many Christians have the idea that the intellect is not important, when in reality it plays a vital role in Christian growth, service, and victory. When God controls the mind, Satan cannot lead the believer astray. The Christian who

studies his Bible and learns the meaning of Bible doctrines is not going to be led astray too easily. We need to be “taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21). We are to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Wherever Paul ministered, he taught the new converts the truths of the Word of God, and this helmet protected them from Satan’s lies.

One Sunday afternoon, I visited a man who had been a deacon in a local church, but was at that time involved in a false cult. We sat at the table with open Bibles, and I tried to show him the truth of God’s Word, but it seemed his mind was blinded by lies. “How did you happen to turn away from a Bible-preaching church and get involved in this belief?” I asked, and his reply stunned me.

“Preacher, I blame the church. I didn’t know anything about the Bible, and they didn’t teach me much more. I wanted to study the Bible, but nobody told me how. Then they made me a deacon, and I wasn’t ready for it. It was too much for me. I heard this man preaching the Bible over the radio and it sounded as if he knew something. I started reading his magazine and studying his books, and now I’m convinced he’s right.”

What a tragedy that when his local church took him in, they failed to fit him with the helmet of salvation. Had they practiced the truth found in 2 Timothy 2:2, this man might not have been a casualty in the battle.

***The sword of the Spirit (v. 17b).*** This sword is the offensive weapon God provides us. The Roman soldier wore on his girdle a short sword which was used for close-in fighting. Hebrews 4:12 compares the Word of God to a sword, because it is sharp and is able to pierce the inner man just as a material sword pierces the body. You and I were “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37; 5:33) when the Word convicted us of our sins. Peter tried to use a sword to defend Jesus in the Garden (Luke 22:47–51); but he learned at Pentecost that the “sword of the Spirit” does a much better job. Moses also tried to conquer with a physical sword (Ex. 2:11–15), only to discover that God’s Word alone was more than enough to defeat Egypt.

A material sword pierces the body, but the Word of God pierces the heart. The more you use a physical sword, the duller it becomes; but using God’s Word only makes it sharper in our lives. A physical sword requires the hand of a soldier, but the sword of the Spirit has its own power, for it is “living and powerful” (Heb. 4:12). The Spirit wrote the Word, and the Spirit wields the Word as we take it by faith and use it. A physical sword wounds to hurt and kill, while the sword of the Spirit wounds to heal and give life. But when we use the sword against Satan, we are out to deal him a blow that will cripple him and keep him from hindering God’s work.

When He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Christ used the sword of the Spirit and defeated the enemy. Three times Jesus said, “It is written” (Luke 4:1–13). Note that Satan can also quote the Word: “For it is written” (Luke 4:10), but he does not quote it completely. Satan tries to use the Word of God to confuse us, so it is important that we know every word that God has given us. “You can prove anything by the Bible,” someone said. True—if you take verses out of context, leave out words, and apply verses to Christians today that do not really apply. The better you know the Word of God, the easier it will be for you to detect Satan’s lies and reject his offers.

In one sense, the “whole armor of God” is a picture of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Truth (John 14:6), and He is our righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) and our peace (Eph. 2:14). His faithfulness makes possible our faith (Gal. 2:20); He is our salvation (Luke 2:30); and He is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14). This means that when we trusted Christ, we received the armor. Paul told the Romans what to do with the armor (Rom. 13:11–14): wake up (Rom. 13:11), cast off sin, and “put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:12). We do this by putting “on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14). By faith, put on the armor and trust God for the victory. Once and for all, we have put on the armor at the moment of salvation. But there must be a daily appropriation. When King David put off his armor and returned to his palace, he was in greater

danger than when he was on the battlefield (2 Sam. 11). We are never out of reach of Satan's devices, so we must never be without the whole armor of God.

### **The Energy (Eph. 6:18–20)**

Prayer is the energy that enables the Christian soldier to wear the armor and wield the sword. We cannot fight the battle in our own power, no matter how strong or talented we may think we are. When Amalek attacked Israel, Moses went to the mountaintop to pray, while Joshua used the sword down in the valley (Ex. 17:8–16). It took both to defeat Amalek—Moses' intercession on the mountain, and Joshua's use of the sword in the valley. Prayer is the power for victory, but not just any kind of prayer. Paul tells how to pray if we would defeat Satan.

**Pray always.** This obviously does not mean "always saying prayers." We are not heard for our "much speaking" (Matt. 6:7). "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17) says to us, "Always be in communion with the Lord. Keep the receiver off the hook!" Never have to say when you pray, "Lord, we come into Thy presence," because you never left His presence! A Christian must "pray always" because he is always subject to temptations and attacks of the devil. A surprise attack has defeated more than one believer who forgot to "pray without ceasing."

**Pray with all prayer.** There is more than one kind of praying: prayer, supplication, intercession, thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1). The believer who prays only to ask for things is missing out on blessings that come with intercessions and giving of thanks. In fact, thanksgiving is a great prayer weapon for defeating Satan. "Praise changes things" as much as "prayer changes things." Intercession for others can bring victory to our own lives. "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends" (Job 42:10).

**Pray in the Spirit.** The Bible formula is that we pray to the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. Romans 8:26–27 tells us that only in the Spirit's power can we pray in the will of God. Otherwise, our praying could be selfish and out of the will of God. In the Old Testament tabernacle, there was a small golden altar standing before the veil, and here the priest burned the incense (Ex. 30:1–10; Luke 1:1–11). The incense is a picture of prayer. It had to be mixed according to God's plan and could not be counterfeited by man. The fire on the altar is a picture of the Holy Spirit, for it is He who takes our prayers and "ignites" them in the will of God. It is possible to pray fervently in the flesh and never get through to God. It is also possible to pray quietly in the Spirit and see God's hand do great things.

**Pray with your eyes open.** *Watching* means "keeping on the alert." The phrase "watch and pray" occurs often in the Bible. When Nehemiah was repairing the walls of Jerusalem, and the enemy was trying to stop the work, Nehemiah defeated the enemy by watching and praying. "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch" (Neh. 4:9). "Watch and pray" is the secret of victory over the world (Mark 13:33), the flesh (Mark 14:38), and the devil (Eph. 6:18). Peter went to sleep when he should have been praying, and the result was victory for Satan (Mark 14:29–31, 67–72). God expects us to use our God-given senses, led by the Spirit, so that we detect Satan when he is beginning to work.

**Keep on praying.** The word *perseverance* simply means "to stick to it and not quit." The early believers prayed this way (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4); and we also should pray this way (Rom. 12:12). Perseverance in prayer does not mean we are trying to twist God's arm, but rather that we are deeply concerned and burdened and cannot rest until we get God's answer. As Robert Law puts it, "Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven; it is getting God's will done on earth" (*Tests of Life*, [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968]). Most of us quit praying just before God is about to give the victory. Not everybody is so constituted that he can sincerely spend a whole night in prayer, but all of us can persevere in prayer far more than we do. The early church prayed without ceasing when Peter was in prison and, at the last

moment, God gave them their answer (Acts 12:1–19). Keep on praying until the Spirit stops you or the Father answers you. Just about the time you feel like quitting, God will give the answer.

***Pray for all the saints.*** The Lord’s Prayer begins with “Our Father”—not “My Father.” We pray as part of a great family that is also talking to God, and we ought to pray for the other members of the family. Even Paul asked for the prayer support of the Ephesians—and he had been to the third heaven and back. If Paul needed the prayers of the saints, how much more do you and I need them! If my prayers help another believer defeat Satan, then that victory will help me too. Note that Paul did not ask them to pray for his comfort or safety, but for the effectiveness of his witness and ministry.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 57–60.