

Spiritual Warfare-3
“Weapons Training”
Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

Hey Newsong! I want to take a moment to welcome all of our first time guests, welcome back our second-time guests and let's welcome our church family watching with us online today!

We're in a series all about spiritual warfare...and if you missed any of the messages in this series, you can go back and check them out...just go to the app!

What we've been learning is that every single one of us is involved in a spiritual battle...It's a battle between the forces of good and evil, light and darkness, Heaven and hell...

It's a battle for our soul...

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Paul tells us that this battle we're engaged in is a struggle...The Greek Word is **pal'-ay** and it means to wrestle and as soon as Paul's readers heard this word they immediately understood the seriousness of the spiritual battle we face as Christians...

If you've ever seen olympic wrestling, you see two individuals involved in a competition where one will skilfully get their opponent on his or her back and pin them down for a count of three...

That's how wrestling was in Paul's day, but it was a little more brutal...

The person pinned down didn't just lose the match...they lost their eyes. Their eyes were literally gouged out and they spent the rest of their life blind...

That's the spiritual battle that we're in...
That's the point that Paul is trying to make...
We have a very real and powerful enemy...

The devil wants to keep you blind...
The devil wants to keep you ignorant...
The devil wants to keep you distracted...
And he's constantly planning an attack to take you out!

Paul's saying that we as Christians, do not have a choice, we are in a wrestling match, and it's not against flesh and blood...it's against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

I like how Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa explains this...

“Our battle is against a triple alliance. The world, the flesh and the devil; The enemy around us, the enemy within us and the enemy above us”-Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa

The bottom line is the enemy wants to make you a casualty of war...He wants to keep you from God's purpose and plan for your life...

Paul wants us to grasp the seriousness of the situation...it's time for us to fight...fight using the Name of Jesus, the Blood of Jesus and the Word of Jesus...

Fight for victory over our mind, by taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ...

Fight for victory over our body by reminding ourselves that we've been crucified with Christ and we know longer live, but Christ lives in us...

Fight for victory over the culture, that although we live in the world, we don't live by the world's standards we live by God's standards knowing that our citizenship is in Heaven...

So today we're going to take everything we learned in basic training and tactical training go into weapons training...and I want to show you from God's Word how we can be armed for battle

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.-Ephesians 6:10-18

Notice how many times the Apostle Paul tells us to stand...in other words hold your ground...dig in your heels...

You see when Paul is saying be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power, that doesn't mean that we sit back and do nothing...

No he tells us that after we've done everything...what's that mean?

It means we're actively involved in the fight...It means we've put our basic training and our tactical training into practice...

And now we're still standing firm...

In other words, we're still living our lives in obedience to God...

We're in the middle of the battle, but we're walking with the Holy Spirit...We're surrendered to God...We're replacing old ways of thinking with God's way of thinking...we're capturing lies and replacing them with the truth...

Which brings us to our first piece of armor...

The Belt of **TRUTH**

14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist-Eph 6:14 (NIV)

Every Roman soldier wore a belt that wasn't just for looks but was actually a vital part of their armor...

The belt was attached and helped to bring stability to other pieces of the armor...Like the breastplate and the sheath that held the sword...You lose your belt everything falls!

Paul describes our spiritual armor as “The Belt of Truth.” This means that the only way that we can stand firm and be victorious in the battle is if we...

Stay **CLOSE** to Jesus

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
-John 14:6 (NIV)

Jesus is the Truth which means the only way we can find purpose in this life and enjoy Him in the next, is if we live His way...

Not just on Sunday...But Monday through Saturday...It means that my walk lines up with my talk...I’m being truthful and not hypocritical

I'm not trying to live my life following Jesus and following the ways of the world...

I'm not trying to build my life on the Word of God and on the wisdom of men...No Paul says that we need to put on the belt of truth, because if we don't everything's going to fall down!

When our youngest daughter Maria was just a toddler, she was tall for her age...and we could never find pants that would fit her in both the waist and the length...

So my wife had to buy her a belt...well guess who hated wearing the belt? She would always take it off and whenever she would run and play her pants would fall and trip her up...

Likewise, we have to remember that we live in a fallen world...the devil is a master manipulator and deceiver...

There is no such thing as your truth...there's only THE truth! All truth belongs to God...

It doesn't matter what people say, or how people feel about the truth that doesn't change the truth...1 & 1 has been and always will be two...whether I believe it, or accept it, or choose to live by it!

We have to stay close to Jesus, we have to wrap truth around our waist...we have to stand firm and stay committed to Him...Committed to His Word...and fight from that truth

Otherwise it's all going to fall down, and you can't fight with your pants down!

“Every Christian must be faithful in holding the truth of God's word, but it is also necessary for the truth to hold us. We must apply it to our daily lives.

As we test everything by the truth, we find strength and protection in the combat”-William MacDonald

The truth is our belt that holds us up...so we can fight!

**The Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS
*with the breastplate of righteousness in place-Ephesians 6:14 (NIV)***

The Roman Soldier would put on the breastplate which protected all of the vital organs...Without the breastplate a soldier is vulnerable...

Paul says that our spiritual breastplate isn't made of metal but of righteousness...What does that mean?

The Bible tells us that when we repent and put our faith in Jesus we are justified meaning that God has forgiven us of all of our sin...

So let's say that God has an office...

In His office is a filing cabinet with everyone's name in it

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God-Romans 3:23 (NIV)

So because God is all knowing He knows everything you've ever done...every lie you told, every item you stole...everything...

So it doesn't take long for your file to get pretty big, because every sin is a debt that you owe...and has to be paid.

When we accept Jesus, God forgives all of our sins...and he puts into our file the righteousness of Christ...

22 This righteousness is given through faith in[h] Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.-Romans 3:23-24 (NIV)

This means that because of Jesus, you and I stand righteous before God...It doesn't mean we never sin...but it does mean that we have a right relationship with God!

Why is this so important? Because the moment you sin (and you will) the devil will come along and say... "that's it...you messed up...God can never forgive you"

Paul says you've got to put on the breastplate of righteousness that says, I don't deserve it, I can't earn it, but because of Jesus I have a right relationship with God!

When I sin (and I do) I know that I don't have to stay in that place...

I can come and ask my Heavenly Father for forgiveness and He will meet me right where I am and He will forgive me! So the breastplate of righteousness reminds me

Keep short **ACCOUNTS**

“Jesus died so that you might have the righteousness of God. When you fall, get up quickly. Keep in a right relationship with God and with others.”-Nicky Gumbel

There’s nothing the devil wants more than to see the church fighting...The devil always brings division...So because we have a right relationship with God, we can treat others right!

We can ask one another for forgiveness, because we’ve been forgiven!

Paul says we need to put this on like a breastplate

When you got dressed this morning you picked out your clothes for church...

Clothes that look nice...

Clothes that will protect you from the elements..

Clothes that go wherever you go...

Clothes that do whatever you do...

That's how we're to put on the breastplate of righteousness...Paul calls it putting on Christ

13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.-Romans 13:13-14 (NIV)

So I put on Jesus when I get up in the morning and I wear Him all day long...He goes with me...He helps me love God and love others...

The breastplate of righteousness reminds me of all that Jesus has done for me and reminds me to live my life for Him!

Paul moves from the breastplate to...

The right SHOES

15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

We have quite a few sneaker heads and shoeaholics in our church family...Anyone here love shoes? Come on ladies I know you love shoes, because you actually borrow each other's shoes...it's crazy...

You go to work and your co-worker is like Oh girl...I love those...what size are those...7? Let me see...

That's something you don't see guys doing...

I've worked in construction, I've worked in an office, and never have I seen a guy say... "Are those new Tim's? What are they size 12...let me try one on...Guys don't do that..."

It's just an observation...In fact, I've never been in a conversation with a guy, and they were like... "Man I love these shoes...but they're killing me..."

But ladies...you amaze me, because you will wear those things KNOWING that you're going to be limping for the next couple of days, and the only thing that matters is that you know they look good!

If you're into sports you know that you need the right shoe for the right sport...You can't wear basketball sneakers to play football...you can't hockey skates to bowl in...

This is also true when it comes to warfare...

Can you imagine a soldier going out onto the battlefield in bare feet? You need the right shoes...And the Roman Soldiers wore these thick leather shoes that had pieces of metal embedded in them so that they could stand their ground when they were in battle...But not just stand their ground...It was also to advance...to gain ground!

A soldier without shoes isn't prepared to fight...Which is why Paul speaks of every Christian needing to be ready with their shoes on...to stand their ground and to take ground...to advance the gospel!

This means that every Christian should
Get **ACTIVELY** involved spreading the Gospel

Everytime you share your faith...

Everytime you serve others in Jesus Name...

Every item you bring in for bags of blessing...

Every time you tithe and give to missions...

You are taking ground for the Kingdom...
You are helping to advance the Good
News...The Gospel...That because of Jesus
we can have peace with God!

13 For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”-Romans 10:13-15 (NLT)

Do me a favor...take a look at your feet for a second...Aren't they beautiful? You're like uh you haven't seen them...these dogs are hurting...No...God says they're beautiful and here's why...

Think about all of the places your feet bring you in the course of a week...Now think about all of the people that you have interaction with in that one week period...

Your feet are beautiful because you have the ability to bring the light of Jesus into their world...When you do that...You're entering into enemy territory...And you're going to get fired upon...so you've got to stand firm in the peace that you have with God...

But when you share your faith, or you invite another person to church or Bible study...and they get saved...You're taking back the ground that the enemy had occupied! All hell is going to rage...but all Heaven is going to rejoice!

I want us to be so passionate about advancing the Gospel...that every time we place our feet on the floor to get out of bed, the devil is like ugghh not again!

What would our homes look like...

What would our schools look like...

What would our workplaces look like...

Our city look like if we all decided that we're going to shine for Jesus? If we all had the mindset that as long as I'm breathing...I'm going to do my best to plunder hell and populate heaven!

Now when we do this...we can expect heavy enemy fire...We've been experiencing this over our 21 days of prayer...It comes with the territory which is why need to hold up

The Shield of **FAITH**

16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

The Roman soldiers used a shield that was 2½ feet wide and 4½ feet long...

It had niches in the top and bottom corner where they could lock in with another shield next to them...

So as they were marching and the enemy would fire arrows their way they could link together and form a wall..In some instances the wall was a mile or more long...

Because the front of their shields were made of leather, they would soak them in water so that when the arrows hit them they would extinguish...

Paul tells us that we need to take up the shield of faith when the lies and whispers of the enemy come in like fiery darts...To have faith means to have a simple trust in God

Keep **TRUSTING** in difficult times

When we're in the battle and the enemy is just flinging those doubts at us...

we need to affirm our trust in the Lord...Stand our ground and declare...

I know and I believe by faith that my God is with me...that my God is for me...that He is my Shield and my Protection...that He is my Healer and Redeemer...That He is my Rock...

He's given me everything I need to get through this life...and if He brings me to it He will see me through it! No matter what...I trust in God!

It's like the little boy who was on an airplane and suddenly a big storm came out of nowhere...Lighting flashing...the plane was rocking around...

And when everyone was freaking out...the little boy was just sitting there coloring...The woman sitting next to him noticed this and asked "aren't' you scared?"

He looked up and smiled...He saying “Nah I’m not scared, my Daddy is the pilot” He knew that his dad was in control of the situation and he had a child-like faith and trust in him...

You may be thinking, I don’t have that kind of faith...yes you do. You got in your car this morning and trusted it would start...

You got in the uber and trusted that your driver would get you here safely...

You got in the elevator and trusted that it wasn’t going to get stuck between floors...

You sat in your chair and trusted that it was going to hold you up...

That’s the way we hold up our shield of faith...
As a church family...if we see that someone else is struggling...we can lock shields with them and cover them!

This is why we believe in sharing your struggles and your doubts...in being honest and saying that you're going through a battle...so that we as your church family can stand with you through it when the day of evil comes!

The Helmet of **SALVATION**

17 Take the helmet of salvation

The Roman soldiers wore a helmet that had a band to protect the forehead and plates for the cheeks...it also protected the back of the neck...so when it was put on it left very little exposed...

A Roman soldier who lost his helmet was in danger of receiving severe head wounds which would (at the very least) disorient him and make him ineffective in the battle...

The same is true in our spiritual battles...We need to **Protect our THOUGHTS**

Knowing that our battles start in the mind...the enemy is aiming for our mind and he's going to be swinging his double-edged sword of discouragement and doubt...

As I said last week he wants to make you think that you can't win...that you're not even saved...that you're not making a difference...he wants to set up a stronghold in your mind...

So again... we have to take those thoughts captive and replace them with the truth and think about Jesus...

"Sow a thought, reap an action, sow an action, reap a habit, so a habit reap a character sow a character reap a destiny" -Nicky Gumbel

We need to guard the way we think...we need to think clearly, knowing that we are saved...We have and that one day we will not have to fight these battles!

The **SWORD** of the Spirit

...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The Roman Soldier had a sword that was used in close hand to hand battle...it was relatively short so it was easy to cut or stab rapidly...

It also had a double-edge which made it possible to strike on either side...and it was razor sharp...and it had to be used with accuracy...Paul's telling us that in this spiritual war we're fighting we need to

Know our **BIBLE**

I cannot emphasize this enough...

We stand upon the word of God...

We build our lives upon the word of God...

We believe this is the main way God is going to speak to us...

We need to have a daily habit of reading God's Word...we should let it dwell not just in our head but in our heart...

Because the Word of God is a two-fold weapon...It's defensive when it comes to spiritual attacks...but it's also an offensive weapon...

12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.
-Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

Everytime you quote a scripture you're swinging your sword...

When you're sharing your faith and you quote John 3:16 you're swinging your sword at the enemy...

This is why you need to know the Word...
Because the Word is so powerful...
And because it's the most powerful offensive
weapon that we have next to prayer...

Because it's such a powerful weapon it's the
weapon that the enemy will attack...

Oh the Bible...that's just an old fashioned book
The Bible...how can you trust it?
The enemy gets people to neglect it, reject it or
redefine it...depending on where you are
spiritually...

Make no mistake about it...the enemy is
attacking this book...And people are misusing it
and reducing it to some good ideas instead of
what it is the living Word of God...

And you need to know and understand your
word...

And know how to defend yourself and fight against the enemy when he comes in the form of false teaching that's spread by cults and other religions...

Now as we come to a close today, You'll notice that all of the armor is for the front...It's because we're not meant to run away...

Romans 12:21 tells us to overcome evil with good...We need to put on our armor and stand our ground because God has a purpose and a plan for our life...

You can overcome evil with good in your family...in your school, in your workplace... You can take back ground that the enemy has stolen...using the weapons of the word and prayer to make an impact in our world!

All through church history we see Christians putting on their armor and taking back enemy territory...

There's so many, but here's just a couple William Willberforce who led the campaign to abolish slavery...not based on his opinion but based on the Word of God...

Martin Luther King Jr...who was one of the most prominent leaders in the civil rights movement...

Mother Teresa who cared for the poor, the sick, the outcasts of India...

They did these things in Jesus Name because that's what they were called to do...

God wants us to do the same thing...We put on our armor and we fight the good fight and we fight it to win...

We fight with the word and through prayer and in the power of the Holy Spirit...and we get to see the enemy flee!

What's the Holy Spirit Saying To You?

Altar Time