
Christians are in the Midst of a Spiritual War – Are You Equipped?

Ephesians 6:10-18 – Armor of God

Part 1 – Our Enemy

As we continue our study of the letter Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus we are going to skip ahead to chapter six. I think it is important for us to look first ahead and then back into chapter five and the first part of chapter six.

The reason I think this is important is the teaching in chapters 5-6 has to do with marriage, relationships and family dynamics and I think if we look into the spiritual armor of God first then I think it will be helpful as we look into those relationships.

Let's begin by reading **Ephesians 6:10-13**, “**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything to stand firm.**”

Last week I spoke about a couple of different of cultures that are operating in the world today. The ones we deal with here in America are the theonomous and the autonomous. If you remember a theonomous culture is one that has centered its beliefs in God while in an autonomous culture, each person or each group of persons decide what is right or wrong themselves. They do not look to a higher entity. They are their own higher entity.

So naturally we have a clash of cultures. And as Christians, I believe we find ourselves in the minority therefore our beliefs are counter-culture. Our glory days are behind us as a nation.

Some believe we can recapture our glory while some believe we will continue to degenerate deeper and deeper into sin and immorality as a nation. If you consider the slide that has occurred in the last 60 years, it makes one wonder where and if the slide into depravity will stop.

I don't know for sure what God has in mind for this country but I do pray for revival and hope this country will be great again. Great as defined by one nation under God.

But in the meantime we are in a battle aren't we? Verse 12 says we are in a struggle and it isn't just a struggle against the autonomous society around us. No, it is something deeper, darker, more sinister and if we are not properly prepared, properly equipped then we will get beat up, injured and maybe even taken out of the battle.

Look with me at Acts 19:11-16, "God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus whom Paul preaches. Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you? And the man in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

These seven young men were ill prepared for what they encountered weren't they? They didn't know who or what they were truly up against and they tried to use the name of Jesus but in reality they did not know Jesus and Jesus did not know them. The evil spirit knew this and jumped on all seven of them and beat them up. I heard it in a movie once, you came to a gunfight with only a knife. These men did not have an understanding of the fight they were in and all that occurred was they were beat up and wounded.

Do you ever feel that way, beat up and wounded? Maybe it is because you don't have enough understanding of the battle we as Christians are in. And maybe we don't have enough understanding of the weapons and armor that are available to us.

Sometimes we can end up battling people, things and circumstances when in reality it is, as I said before, it is a deeper, darker and more sinister force behind things or people than we realize.

Think for a moment of David, of David and Goliath fame. As David was about to go out and meet Goliath King Saul came to him and offered his fancy armor fashioned for a king. David put Saul's armor on but he had trouble maneuvering so he took them back off and proceeded with the weapons he was familiar with.

I wonder if sometimes we are like David only we continue to wear the world's armor. We try and do battle our own way or the way someone else suggests and once again we get beat up and wounded.

Do you know what armor David wore? The armor of the Lord. Look at the conversation David had with Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:44-45, "The Philistine, Goliath, also said to David, 'Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.' Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.'

Well, we know what the results were. A little shepherd boy took on the mighty seven foot tall warrior who had weapons of a sword, a spear and a javelin. But what weapon did David have? A sling and some rocks and armor he had was the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.

We are given weapons, we are given armor but if we don't understand them, understand who we are battling against and how to use the weapons and armor available to us then we are defeated before we even show up to the battle.

Let's talk first about who we are struggling or in battle with. Paul gives us a description.

In verse 11 we read our battle is against **the schemes of the devil**. Then verse 12 tells us...

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Paul first tells us that it is

1. We are against the schemes of the devil

And then he goes on to give some structure to what the devil has in place. There are mentioned in these verses...

- a. Rulers
- b. Powers
- c. World forces of darkness
- d. Spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places

They are really talking about the same thing and that is the government of evil that Satan has put in place.

The best place to start is with this verse in **1 John 5:19**, **"We now that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."**

Now this verse was written by John. Not John the Baptist but John who was an apostle of Jesus. He wrote the Gospel of John, Revelation as well as the books of 1, 2 & 3 John.

Now the amazing thing about the statement is John wrote, the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, was John wrote this 30-40 years after Jesus accomplished His work upon the cross.

If Jesus accomplished all He said He did then how is it that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one?

2. Why do you think Satan has the power today that he does?

- a. Because God allows him to have a certain measure of power for a season**
- b. Because God's people allow him to have a certain measure of power**

The first question I think that needs to be answered is who is Satan and how did he come to have such power. Before we get into the teaching of the spiritual armor we first must discover why we need spiritual armor.

Jesus said it is the truth that will set you free. Knowing your adversary is gaining truth.

Let's examine where Satan came from and how he got so much power in the world.

The first thing we need to know is that

3. Satan was actually a powerful angel in the kingdom of God.

Even though this passage speaks of the King of Tyre, most scholars would agree this passage is a prophetic description of Satan.

Ezekiel 28:12-18, ““You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. 16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.”

According to this passage Satan was appointed as a high guardian cherub. This was one of the highest orders of angels.

But look at this next passage.

Isaiah 14:12-14 How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

4. Satan’s heart was filled with pride

You can hear the pride in Satan. I will ascend to the heavens, I will raise my throne above God, I will make myself like the Most High.

In the previous passage we read that Satan's heart became proud on account of his beauty, and he corrupted his wisdom because of his splendor. He was called the morning star, son of the dawn.

If you want to think about original sin this is it. It was when Satan began to take notice of the position, the glory, the honor and the beauty he was given. He became self-consumed. Not unlike what people can become today.

So Satan was cast down and it wasn't just that he was cast down to earth but he stirred up a revolt in heaven and a big battle occurred sometime after the creation of earth and sometime before or during the creation of the garden of Eden.

The result of this battle is that Satan and all the angels that were with him were cast down to the earth where he set up a dark kingdom opposing God in any and every way possible.

Revelation 12:7-9, "Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he (Satan) was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."

5. Satan was defeated in heaven

Some scholars would say that Satan had a third of the angels in heaven on his side and this is where the legions of demons came from. They are fallen angels.

So when we read...For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, we know it is Satan and the dark kingdom he has set up here on earth.

I have more to say about Satan and his ability to rule on earth but we will continue with this teaching next week.

To wind this up this morning I want us to think about what Jesus accomplished upon the cross.

1 John 3:8, "...The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

That is in fact what Jesus did.

6. Satan is defeated on earth

Colossians 2:15, "He (Jesus) disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

While Satan was and is up to what we read in **2 Corinthians 4:4, "...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ..."**

One of Jesus' first public statements about His mission on earth is found in **Matthew 4:18-19, "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, ¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."**

Jesus read this from Isaiah who had wrote it some 750 years before He was born. It was a prophecy about Jesus and what His mission was going to be.

Remember what was said about Satan and what he was about in 2 Corinthians 4:4. Satan was blinding the mind of unbelievers. What did Jesus come to do? Help them recover their sight. What else did it say about Satan in 1 John 5:19? The whole world was under his power. What did Jesus come to do? Proclaim the opportunity to be released from the bondage Satan has them under, to set them free from Satan's dark kingdom and to allow them to come into Jesus' kingdom, the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:13, "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin."

This is the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Being in the kingdom of heaven doesn't just mean that you are going to heaven when this life is over. That is true, but it also means you have been delivered from Satan's grasp in this life and now you can learn how live free and to be used by God to further His kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.

Knowing our enemy, knowing the power that has been placed within us, understanding the armor we have been given and understanding the weapons of our warfare. This is what we are going to be looking at over the next several weeks.

This is how we can see not only victory in our lives but victory in the lives of our love ones, our neighbors, within this church and through this church into the community around us.

This is what God wants for you. This is why Christ died for you. So that you could live victoriously with Him in these days and for all eternity.

This is what we want...Amen?