Maybe you played *Starship Troopers*, *Call of Duty* or *Battlefield*. There are more war/battle video games than you can shake a stick at. Just a way to kill off an afternoon, right? (get it “kill of”??) Video games have lifelike graphics, historically accurate weapons and equipment and highly realistic layouts and geography. It is all for fun.

When I was growing up, I had ‘little green army men.’ Did anybody else play with these guys? I also have a couple of G.I. Joes and some equipment. It was all for fun. It was just playing.

There is a spiritual conflict that is all-too-real. We are involved. We are combatants in a spiritual war that has been going on for ions. Some folks deny its reality, while others opt to just not think about it. Neither of these extricates one from the conflict. It is NOT just play.

I am not big on scare-tactics or emotionalism. I prefer to be straight-up and biblical. The Holy Spirit will apply God’s word to the hearts and minds of people. I try to communicate clearly, concisely, as well as in a way that is interesting and engaging. We are going to invest some time and attention in seeing what Paul says here in Ephesians about this spiritual war that is real and personal.

We might organize Ephesians under the headings of the Wealth of the Christian, the Walk of the Christian and the Warfare of the Christian. Chapters 1-3 talk about the Wealth. The middle section, chapters 4, 5 and the beginning of 6, deals with the Walk. The third section, starting with 6.10 addresses the Warfare. This morning we will set the stage and share some background on what we might call World War NOW! We will use three sections to organize this morning’s thoughts : The Struggle, The Seed War and The Spiritual Warfare. Let’s get into it.

**I.  THE STRUGGLE**

*Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12  For* ***our struggle is not*** *against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.* Ephesians 6:10-12

 A. Combatants

 “***our*** *struggle*”

 Yes folks, **WE** are at ***WAR***! Maybe you would say, “But, Bro Johnny, I didn’t sign up for that.” Maybe you would quote Michael Jackson, “I’m a lover, not a fighter.” This is **OUR** struggle.

 When we were saved, we became part of God’s family. We were adopted as a child of God. Being in God’s family puts us smack-dab in the middle of it. We’ll talk more about the family part of it in a bit. The bottom line is — **WE** are involved, like it or not. It is our struggle.

 B. Constant

 Paul says, “*our struggle* ***is***…” The verb “*is*” is present tense. That means that it is continuous action. In other words, our struggle is on-going. This warfare is constant — ***ALL***-the-time.

 Now, this is not new for us. This has been going on for a looong, long time. It is still going strong right now.

 Unfortunately, it is a constant struggle — all-the-time — on-going — continuous. We are in it. We need to be in-it-to-win-it!

 C. Combat

 “*struggle*” means combat.

 This is hand-to-hand combat. See this is up close and personal.

 Soooooo . . . If we haven't been experiencing **ANY** opposition, we might want to check out some stuff. Like one fella said, “If you aren’t running **into** the devil, it may be because you are both going the same way.” We do not want to go his way.

 We do not go around LOOKING for trouble, looking for spiritual conflict, but if we are walking with Jesus, we are BOUND to run into it. If we are on fire for God, the enemy will be trying to hose us down and cool us off. If we are experiencing victory, the enemy is close by, ready to hit us.

 Our purpose is not it ‘pick a fight with the devil’ per se. Our purpose is to experience this wealth that we have seen in Ephesians and to walk for and with the Lord. When we do that, the enemy will find US.

 The enemy attacks us individually and corporately. Paul is talking specifically about our individual struggle against the enemy. It is one-on-one, up-close and personal. It is hand-to-hand combat. It is wrestling. We struggle individually, but we also combat collectively.

**II.  THE SEED WAR**

 Gen 3.8ff

 Notice this - “So the LORD God said to the serpent: ’*Because you have done this, you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. 15 I will put* ***hostility*** *between* ***you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring****. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel’*” (Gen 3:14-15).

“*Offspring*” is literally “*seed*.” Here, all the way back in the Garden of Eden, we find that there has been a struggle. The enemy has been opposing the Lord. He wants to thwart the plan and purposes of God. One way he does that is to ‘mess with’ **us**. You see, the enemy attacks the **Father** by attacking His **children**.

One interesting thing to note here is a biological fact. The Lord said there would be enmity between the “*seed*” of the serpent and the “*seed*” of the woman (Gn 3.15). Biologically, women do not have “*seed*;” they have eggs. Men have “*seed*.”

There has only been one “*seed of woman*.” That is the Lord Jesus, the virgin-born Son of God. Jesus is **THE** seed, singular. That what Paul says in Galatians. We read, “*But the law is not based on faith; instead, the one who does these things will live by them. 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. 14 The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith. 15 Brothers and sisters, I’m using a human illustration. No one sets aside or makes additions to a validated human will. 16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his* ***seed****.* ***He does not say “and to seeds*,” *as though referring to many, but referring to one, and to your seed, who is Christ***” (Gal 3:12-16).

We could say that there is a war between the sons of Adam and the sons of the serpent. The serpent is trying to frustrate the plans and purposes of God. He attacks the Father by attacking His children. We are caught up in this epic confrontation.

**III. THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

*For our struggle is* ***not against flesh and blood****, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil,* ***spiritual*** *forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand*. (Eph 6:12-13)

 A. Not physical

 *Not against blood and flesh*

 Our opponents do not maintain physical bodies

 B. But spiritual

 *the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens*

 NOTE : in the Greek there are definite articles with each entity listed — THE rulers, THE authorities, THE cosmic powers, THE evil spirit forces in the heavenly realm.

 Paul says we have multiple ‘kinds’ of opposing personnel. These are powerful spirit-beings, led by the devil. These are “*cosmic powers*.”

 Look at Daniel 10. 1ff. Here is an example of the conflict between spirit beings in the unseen realm.

The Bible talks about “the heavens.” The word itself is plural. There are basically three ‘levels’ of the heavens.

* The **first** heaven is the visible and natural heaven with the sun moon and stars that we see.
* The **third** heaven is God’s dwelling place.
* The **second** heaven is ‘in-between.’ It is the spiritual realm. This where the war is unfolding.

* 1.3 *Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who* ***has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens*** *in Christ.*
* 1.20 *He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and* ***seating him at his right hand in the heavens***
* 2.6 *He also raised us up with him and* ***seated us with him in the heavens*** *in Christ Jesus*,
* 3.10 *This is so that God’s multi-faceted wisdom* ***may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens***.
* 6.12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, *spiritual forces* ***in the heavens***. Ephesians 6:12

 C. Very real

* The temptation in the Garden—Gen 3
* The opposition to Daniel’s answer— Dan 10
* Satan’s temptation of Jesus—Luk 4
* Satan desired to sift the disciples - Lk 22.31
* Paul hindered by satan - *But as for us, brothers and sisters, after we were forced to leave you for a short time (in person, not in heart), we greatly desired and made every effort to return and see you face to face. 18 So we wanted to come to you ​— ​even I, Paul, time and again ​— ​but* ***Satan hindered us***. 1 Th 2:17-18

Remember the story about Elisha and his servant (2 Kings 6.8ff)? The Aramean king was trying to defeat Israel and Elisha was warning the king and Israel was avoiding every attempt to corner them. Someone told this king that Elisha was giving the king of Israel the intel. The king sent an ARMY to bring Elisha. Look at verse 6 … “When the servant of the man of God got up early and went out, he discovered an army with horses and chariots surrounding the city. So he asked Elisha, ‘*Oh, my master, what are we to do?’ 16 Elisha said, ‘Don’t be afraid, for those who are with us outnumber those who are with them.’ 17 Then Elisha prayed, ‘LORD, please open his eyes and let him see.’ So the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he saw that the mountain was covered with horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 K 6.15-7).*

These angels were in the ‘unseen realm.’ The Lord allowed the servant to see them. Tony Evans once said, “If all we see is what we see, we will never see all that is to be seen.” There is an entire unseen realm, another dimension, where spiritual events transpire all the time. This realm touches ours; they somehow overlap.

Let’s sum up. There is an ancient **spiritual struggle** going on. It is like a blood feud; it is a family affair. The old serpent and his seed oppose the Lord God Almighty and His seed. We might call it **the Seed War**. There are also powerful spirt-beings — angels and demons involved. We are in this struggle. It is still going on here and now. The serpent opposes the people, purposes and plans of God.

This spiritual conflict goes on in the spirit-realm and spills over into our physical world. We have our feet in both worlds. The Spirit War is REAL. The spiritual struggle is real and personal.

We need to be in-it-to-***win***-it! Jesus has won the decisive victory through His death, burial and resurrection. The outcome has been decided, but the end of the fighting has not yet come. Right now, we are in on-going spiritual conflict. It is REAL and PERSONAL.

It is a struggle. It is wrestling. It is hand-to-hand combat. It is house –to-house. It is urban street fighting. It is rough and tumble. The serpent does not observe the Geneva Conventions. He does not honor the Marquess of Queensberry rules. The devil is down and dirty, and he does NOT play fair. It is a life-or-death struggle.

The best news is that the **LORD is ON OUR SIDE**! He fights for us. He calls us to STAND. That is what Paul says “***stand***!”

* Are YOU standing **with** the Lord?
* Are you standing Jesus?
* Are you standing **on** the word of God?
* Are standing **up** as a believer?
* Are you standing **out** as a child of God?

Are you saved? You CAN’T stand w/ God and He can’t stand w/ you if you are not saved.

* This morning — RIGHT NOW — you can be **saved**.
* This morning — RIGHT NOW — you can **start standing.**
* This morning — RIGHT NOW — you can **start OVER.**