Atmosphere. What do I mean by that? “Atmosphere,” some synonyms are “air, sky, heaven, ether, ambiance.” That's a start. The atmosphere is what surrounds us. It is where we are, where we live. Another word might be milieu. Synonyms for this are “setting, environment, scene, background, situation, ambiance, atmosphere, climate.” “Environment,” synonyms for this one include “setting, situation, atmosphere, milieu, location, surroundings, environ.”

So, again, atmosphere is what surrounds us. It is where we are, where we live. Atmosphere is what is all around us, physically, as well as spiritually. He is an example. My Aunt Betty and Uncle Louie lived in a suburb of Birmingham, AL. Birmingham had steel mills. The process of producing steel created various by-products. Back in the day, when we would head to B’ham to visit Betty and Louie and my cousin Danny, you could tell when you were getting close. You could tell because you could ***see*** the air. Yes, there was air pollution. There was stuff in the atmosphere, and you could actually see it.

Does anybody have a smoke alarm in your house? Yes; we do, too. What about a carbon dioxide detector? Why does someone need a CO2 detector? That’s right. It is odorless, tasteless and you cannot see it. Too much carbon dioxide can kill you. A detector ***might*** be useful.

My point is that there are things in the atmosphere around us ALL the time. Some of them we can ***see***. Some of them we ***can’t*** ***see***. Ever since Adam and Eve ate us out of house and home, we have lived in a hostile environment. Wild animals, thorns, thistles, briars, splinters, mosquitoes, tables legs and all manners of dangers are always lurking. They are lurking and ready to deal us a painful blow.

But that’s not all. Not only are there **PHYSICAL** dangers in our world, but there are also **SPIRITUAL** dangers. We have looked at our adversaries, the devil and the demonic. But there is more, much more. The atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being is permeated by that which is evil, sinful and shameful. I want us to be aware of the atmosphere in which we live. We need to **KNOW**,so we can be **SAFE**!

Man-made climate-change may not even ***be*** a REAL thing. But I can tell you that the moral/ethical/spiritual climate **HAS** changed dramatically. Think about how much moral and ethical erosion we have witnessed in our life-times. We saw the spread of abortion as birth control. We saw prayer taken out of schools. We have seen the advent of propaganda.

History has been re-written, **NOT** because of new information, but because of new **AGENDAS**. TV news has become the media arm of leftist political operatives. Search engines on the internet are programmed to ***tilt*** results in certain directions. The algorithms employed in social media websites are ***slanted*** in certain directions. All of this is designed to affect how we think, how we act, and even how we vote. We are bombarded with it ALL the time.

We have seen our schools ***slowly transitioned away from*** traditional moral, ethical and religious values toward godless humanistic socialism. We have witnessed ‘drag-queen-story hour’ become a thing in our public libraries, as all forms of sexual promiscuity and perversion have infiltrated television programming, movies and media. *Leave It to Beaver* has been replaced by *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. Family values haven't been done way with; they have been **skewed**. They have been ***bent away*** from normal and traditional toward “new-normal” and progressive.

This is all part of ***satan’s insidious effort*** to de-throne the True-and-Living God and place himself upon the throne of the universe. These are “*the schemes of the devil*” that Paul talks about in Eph 6.11. It is part of the atmosphere in which we live. This is “*the evil day*” he mentions in Eph 6.13. We struggle against the machinations of “*the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against the evil spiritual forces in the heavens*” (6.12).

**THIS *is*** the atmosphere in which we live. Some of this we can **see**. Some of it we **cannot**. Either way we **MUST be aware** of its presence. To be fore-warned is to be fore-armed. The military talks about “readiness.” **WE** must be ***ready*** to deal with what we face. Folks, “*our struggle is not against flesh and blood* “ (6.12).

The military has revamped its physical fitness program. They said this is to “enhance readiness and effectiveness on the battlefield and to increase the lethality of the force”

“**Physical** readiness is the ability to meet the physical demands of any duty or combat position, move lethally on the battlefield, accomplish the mission and continue to fight, win, and come home healthy.”

“This physical goal is supported by optimal **mental** function. The goal and the function are inseparable, linked together. The ability to tolerate physical duress is a function of mental toughness.” ( https://co.ng.mil/Portals/25/H2F/Physical%20Readiness.pdf )

They say this new fitness approach is to “Optimize Soldier personal readiness - Optimize physical and non-physical performance - Reduce injury rates - Rapidly rehabilitate and recondition Soldier following injury - Improve overall Soldier and unit morale and effectiveness” ( https://www.ausa.org/sites/default/files/5-MAR-H2F-Update-to-AUSA\_27-FEB-V2\_002\_.pdf ).

Maybe we need to revamp ***spiritual*** fitness program! We need to optimize our physical and spiritual performance for the glory of God and for our own good.

Walk with me quickly over some familiar ground. Go to Ephesians 4.1. . .

4.1 Walk worthily

4.14 not tossed by waves and blown by winds of doctrine

4.22 deceitful desires (19)

5.2 Walk in love

5.6 beware of deception of empty arguments

5.11 fruitless works of darkness

5.15-6 Walk in wisdom … because the days are evil

5.18 Be constantly filled with the Spirit

6.10 Be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength

6.11 the schemes of the devil

6.12 the cosmic powers of this darkness

 The evil, spiritual forces in the heavens

6.13 Evil day

6.16 flaming arrows of the evil one

Paul is teaching us how to walk. He is teaching us how to LIVE in a world like ours. He knows, and shows us, that “*the days are evil*.” He is not alone. Remember how Jesus teaches us to pray? “*Deliver us from evil*” (Matt 6.13).

**Consider just SOME of what the Bible tell us about our readiness** :

Ps 34.19 - *One who is righteous has many adversities, but the Lord rescues him from them all*.

Ps 97.10 **-** *You who love the Lord,* ***hate evil****! He* ***protects*** *the lives of his faithful ones; he* ***rescues them*** *from the power of the wicked*.

Rom 12.21— *Do not be conquered by evil, but* ***conquer evil with good***.

Rom 8.1-2— ​*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, 2 because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has* ***set you free from the law of sin and death***.

Rom 8.5-9 - *For those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on the things of the Spirit. 6 Now* ***the mindset of the flesh is death****, but* ***the mindset of the Spirit is life and peace****. 7 The mindset of the flesh is* ***hostile*** *to God because it does not submit to God’s law. Indeed, it is unable to do so. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9* ***You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit****, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.*

Romans 8:12-17 - *So then, brothers and sisters,* ***we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh****, 13 because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14* ***For all those led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons****. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead,* ***you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father****! ” 16 The Spirit himself* ***testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children****, 17 and if children, also heirs ​— ​heirs of God and coheirs with Christ ​— ​if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.*

Rom 8.26-28 - *In the same way* ***the Spirit also helps us in our weakness****, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself* ***intercedes for us*** *with inexpressible groanings. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 We know that* ***all things work together for the good of those who love God****, who are called according to his purpose.*

 Rom 8.31 - *What, then, are we to say about these things?* ***If God is for us, who is against us***?

Romans 8:34-39 - *Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised;* ***he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us****. 35* ***Who can separate us from the love of Christ****? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . 37 No, in all these things* ***we are more than conquerors through him who loved us****. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth,* ***nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord****.*

1 Cor 15.57-8 - *But thanks be to God,* ***who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ****! 58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord’s work, because you know that* ***your labor in the Lord is not in vain****.*

Galatians 1:3-5 - *Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who* ***gave himself for our sins*** *to* ***rescue us from this present evil age****, according to the will of our God and Father. 5 To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen*.

“*Rescue*” means “to take out of affliction or danger” - to raise up. Jesus lifts us up above the fray!

We live move and have our being, every single day, in ***an atmosphere of evil***. We are surrounded by it. It is everywhere. We are like a boat in the ocean. As long as we are **in the water** we are fine. When the water starts to get **into the boat**, we are in trouble. We are **IN** the world, but we are not **OF** the world.

In John 17 Jesus prayed for us. Here is part of His prayer, “*I have given them your word. The world hated them because* ***they are not of the world****, just as I am not of the world. 15* ***I am not praying that you take them out of the world*** *but that you* ***protect them from the evil one****. 16* ***They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world****. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world*” (Jn 17:14-8).

We are walking in an atmosphere of **evil**. It is **anti** Christ. It is **opposed** the Lord and everything about Him. It is opposed to His word, His will and His ways. We are struggling, wrestling against *the evil spiritual forces in the heavens*. They are against the purposes, plans and people of God.

And in Jesus’ name **we** are ***AGAINST THEM***! We will **go** where the Lord sends us. We will **DO** as He commands us. We will **BE** what he asks us to be, claiming what He tells us **we HAVE** and who that He says **we ARE**! Even tho we are behind enemy lines, surrounded by evil, we stand.

 ***We will take our stand on the Lord’s side***. We will stand ***for*** Him. We will stand ***with*** Him. We will stand **tall** and we will stand **out**. Having done everything, we will stand. WE. WILL. STAND! We ***are more than conquerors thru Him*** Who loves us! We will stand!

**Are you ready**?? Then, stand up with me, now.

 Say this. Say this with me —

 **I am God’s person.**

 **We are God’s people.**

 **This is God’s church.**

 **We will stand.**

 **I will stand.**

 **We won’t quit.**

 **In the midst of evil**

 **We will stand.**

 **Against the forces of hell**

 **We will stand.**

 **We. Will. Stand.**

 **I will not quit.**

 **We will not quit**

 **Until He comes.**

 **We will stand! We will stand!**

 **Hallelujah!!!**

 **Come QUICKLY Lord Jesus!**