

Ephesians 6:10–18

“How to Stand against the Devil”

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***How are we to stand against the Devil? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Ephesians 6:10–18 prepares us for the first portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these nine verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that though the devil wars ferociously against us, yet we can stand in God's strength by His Spirit's use of His Word and prayer.***

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## Tuesday, February 15, 2022 • Ephesians 6:10–18

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle call the Ephesians saints in v10? What does he command them to do? In Whom? And in what? What does he say to put on (v11)? How much of it? So that they might be able to do what? Against what/whom? What didn't the apostle and the Ephesians wrestle against? Against what did they wrestle? What, again, were they to take up (v13)? How much of it? That they might be able to do what? When? And then what? And then what? What command does v14 repeat? With what are they to gird their loins (waist)? What is to be as a breastplate to them? What footwear should they put on (v15)? How does v16 begin by telling us the importance of this item? What is it? With it, what will they be able to do, to what, from whom? What is the next piece of equipment to take (v17a)? What is the helmet? What is next? Whose sword is it? What is the sword? What are believers to do always (v18)? With all of what two things? In Whom? Being what unto this end with all what? And all what? For all of whom?

Next week's Call to Worship, Prayer for Help, and first song all come from Ephesians 6:10–18 so that we will see that we are singing God's thoughts after Him with *Soldiers of Christ, Arise*.

One of the things that is sometimes missed in the apostle's teaching about the spiritual war is that we are given marching orders. Our Commander in Chief has identified the location and nature of the battle, and has given His great order: "Stand!"

But where, against whom, against what, and how? The context in which this battle occurs has been established by the preceding sections. In 5:8–16, the apostle discussed being light against the darkness by the fruit of the Spirit. And then in 5:17–21 he talked about how the great thing that is needed to live wisely in the evil days is to be filled with the Spirit. Now, he brings us back to that thought in 6:13's "evil day." Before, he had said to "walk" three times (5:1, 8, 15), and now he indicates just how difficult this is by changing the command to "stand" three times (6:11, 13, 14). What has changed? He has told us where the battle is especially taking place: marriages, parent-child relationships, everyday work. For the kingdom of light to advance, ground must not be lost in any of these areas. How often we have heard of those who thought themselves advancing the kingdom but failed to stand in their marriage, parenting, and employment/finances!

So, *against whom* are we doing battle? Coming out of 5:22–6:9, our flesh will say "spouses," "parents," "children," "bosses," or "employees." But it is a great mistake to think that flesh and blood is our great opposition. It is the devil himself (v11) whose very organized army (v12) is taking aim at us. And they do so not so much in the earthly circumstances, but rather attacking who we are in Christ. The "heavenlies" in v12 are the place where we have been "blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (1:3) where He has been raised and seated (1:20), and we have been raised and seated together with Him (2:6). This is where the manifold wisdom of God is displayed in Christ (3:10).

Our marriages, parent-child relationships, and everyday work are where we slip the most. Where we fall the most. And where maintaining the display of Christ's resurrection life in us is most at stake. This is the place where the devil has instructed his well-organized, wicked, forces to attack. This is the place where we must summon not all of our strength, so much as all of the Lord's strength, if we are just to stand!

Finally, *how* are we to do battle? Some Christians marvel at others whom they think to be "real spiritual warriors" or "in real spiritual warfare." Dear Christian, that's you. You are under attack all day, every day. And it is by the Lord's strength that you are to be strong, just so that you can stand. And keep standing.

Having been briefed on the enemy and given our orders, vv14–16 proceed to describe our equipment. We notice that although it is in the Lord Himself and His powerful might that we are to stand, there is a duty placed upon us to put on this armor.

We are told to gird with the belt and put on the breastplate. We are told to put on the shoes and take the shield. Yes, it occurs only by God's grace, only by God's power. But that does not remove from us either responsibility or activity. Rather, it emphasizes that responsibility because the God in Whom we are told to be strong has told us to do this, and it narrows the central focus of our activity to those particular things that this God has told us to do.

A second thing to notice about our equipment, even before getting to the pieces of the armor themselves, is that these are corporate commands. We are not surprised, since this fits perfectly with what the apostles spent much of chapter four drilling into us about how believers grow up into Christ our Head. But, in our fleshly individualism we are forgetful both of the needs and the needfulness of others. So, it bears pointing out that these are pieces of armor that we put on together, as part of the body of Christ. This corporate aspect is especially noticeable in the shoes and the shield. The shoes of the gospel of peace almost certainly refers us back to the beautiful feet of the one who announces good news of peace in Isaiah 52:7, and in this book we have learned that we all address one another with this glorious truth (4:12–16), especially in that corporate worship where we address one another with the Word in songs by which the Lord fills us with His Spirit (5:18–21). If you're missing corporate worship, you are not the beautiful-footed gospelist of Isaiah 52:7 whom we now see as the sure-footed soldier of Ephesians 6:15.

The shield of faith is also one that must be corporately wielded. Of the Roman shields, this was the large one that was used together with the rest of your unit to make an impregnable enclosure. This is confirmed by the fact of its primary use being against fiery darts. Under a hailstorm of pitch-coated fiery arrows, these shields need to be used together in unison. How many a believer has found it nearly impossible to resist doubt and temptation by himself, and then he has gone into the assembly where we all lift together the shield of faith, and the Lord has guarded and delivered him there!

And it is precisely that shield of faith in which we cling to the truth of God, His Word as the belt by which all the pieces are held together. And also to the righteousness of Christ, through which no attack can wound us. It is by the exercise of faith that His perfect truth also makes us wiser in the truth and ourselves more faithful and true. It is by the exercise of faith that Christ's perfect righteousness that has been counted to us begins to be reflected in the righteous way that we live. It is no longer we who live, but Christ Who lives in us. The life that we live, we live by faith in the Son of God Who loved us and gave Himself for us!

So, while it is ultimately true that what we are really being told here is “put on Christ,” it is helpful to see that Christ has given us specific actions by which He will graciously make that an experienced reality in our lives. And first and foremost, those actions are the clinging together to His Word and His righteousness, as He has given to us to do in His corporate worship. It is this that will be the means by which we come to live as children of light in our everyday lives. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God!

In considering all of this armor, we must conclude that in the providence of God, the Christian’s mind is immensely important. As we battle a world whose days are evil, the way not to be conformed to it is to be transformed instead by the renewing of our mind (cf. Rom 12:2). Here, the apostle tells us what God employs for guarding our minds: His salvation. Our minds tend to be wrapped up in ourselves, our circumstances, even our enemies—almost anything but our Savior, the state of salvation into which He has brought and is bringing us, and the saving work by which He has done so. But these are the very things with which our thoughts ought to be obsessed, if our precious minds are to be protected and preserved! This is the helmet of salvation (v17a, cf. 1Thess 5:8, Rom 13:11).

Those who belong to the light and put on the armor of light (Rom 13:12, cf. Eph 5:6–15) are those who keep the eyes of their mind sharply focused upon the rapidly approaching completion of that salvation which Christ has won (Rom 13:11). The unassailable reality of who Christ is and what He has done for us guards our minds by the unassailable certainty of what He shall soon have finished doing in us and to us. This is part of why the helmet and the sword are so closely connected here. With respect to the battle for our minds, we are like David standing over the giant whom he had just knocked down; we have no sword of our own, and must reach instead for that superior sword that belongs to a far superior Warrior (cf. 1Sam 17:45, 50–51; 21:9). The sword of the Holy Spirit Himself (v17b)!

What’s interesting in the transition to v18 is the manner in which this sword is to be wielded—really, the manner in which all of the armor is to be worn. We have seen in vv14–16 that there is a strong emphasis on the necessity of participation in corporate worship and the specific activities that God has commanded in it: hearing the truth of Word read and preached, addressing one another with it in songs of the gospel of peace, taking up together at the Lord’s table the breastplate of Christ’s alien righteousness and the shield of faith as the corporate meal shows forth His death and affirms the covenant in His blood.

But now in v18, the apostle highlights prayer as the means by which this armor that is taken up in the public worship is applied *at all times*. “Praying *always*.” The main place that the Spirit leads us to employ His Word is before the face of God Himself. Everything that the Bible tells us about who God is, and what He has done, we are to be constantly bringing back before Him in prayer, acknowledging everything that the Bible tells us about who we are, what we are like, what God requires of us, and what we need in order to do so.

All prayer. All supplication. What God tells us about Himself and about ourselves in the word of God must become the substance of our praying, for this praying is to be “in the Spirit” Whose sword has just now been mentioned in v17. This is to be the constant condition of the Christian, as he tells us to pray “with all perseverance,” which he calls “being watchful” (literally, staying awake). The one who is not “praying always” from the Word of God, having God as his constant companion and God’s Word as his constant conversation, is asleep in battle!

And the apostle immediately gives us an example of what Word-saturated prayer will be like. It will focus upon what God focuses upon: all of His saints. It will be broad and blanketing in its scope, thinking much upon the whole of Christ’s body. But this broadness will also aim with specificity at those things that Christ Himself has highlighted as necessary. So, guard your mind by being obsessed with Christ’s finished and ongoing work. Accumulate a thorough knowledge of Scripture, that becomes the substance of a constant conversation with God your constant companion. And pray especially for those who have been called to minister that Word to God’s people in all places.

Where and with whom do you spend the most time. Whom will you be tempted to think of as the enemy? But who really are your enemies? What does the enemy want you to do? What will it look like to stand against him? How will you be able to stand against him? How does singing thoughtfully and heartily in public worship help you cling to God’s truth? How does it help you cling to Christ’s righteousness? When we hear, pray, sup, and ‘amen’ together, what are we taking up? With what do your thoughts tend to be consumed? How can they be more consumed with Christ? How do your prayers reflect a care for the church as a whole? How do they reflect a focus on Christ’s plan for His church?

*Sample prayer: Lord, You are our Commander and our Champion, but we are prone to fight the wrong battles or to fight in our own strength. This isn’t just foolish, but wicked, and we look to You to forgive us and reform us, which we ask in Jesus’s Name, AMEN!!*

**Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH539 “Am I a Soldier of the Cross”**

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Ephesians 6 verses 10 through 18. These are God’s words. Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the walls of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. But against principalities against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, Therefore, take off the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand Stand.

Therefore having girded your waist with truth. Having put on the breastplate to righteousness having shod your feet, with the preparation of the Gospel of peace above all taking, the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and take the helmet of this of salvation.

And the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, praying, always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, being watchful to this and with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints So far, the reading of God's inspired and inerrant word. So last week we learned from Revelation 12, as we prepared to sing Amaya soldier of the cross, We learned from Revelation 12, that every believer and every child of a believer is at war is in battle.

You don't get to decide whether or not you're going to be in spiritual warfare. There has been war between the serpent and the Christ, and the seed of the serpent and the Christ. And the woman who is the church and the serpent since the gardens since Genesis chapter 3, this war has been taking place.

And one of the things that happens in Jesus's earthly ministry is that there is a war in heaven during the ministry and with Michael and his angels, Michael apparently, of the Archangels, the chief, and the devil, and his angels, and that an anticipation of Jesus ascending and taking his seat upon the throne.

The devil is cast down the Lord, Jesus tells the disciples when they return, that when he has sent them out. And then they return and their rejoicing and reporting over their ministry. Jesus says, I saw Satan fall, like lightning an occasion that we can line up with the same thing happening in the book of Revelation and know that Revelation was talking about things that were happening during the earthly ministry of Jesus among other times.

Revelation does talk about many, many different times, but for us, There is no longer an adversary who or an accuser, who accuses us a stay at night in heaven. The in the accuser has been cast down and the war has really come to earth. Not that the devil didn't attack people.

During no, don't brush your hair. Sophia put that brush down and pay attention. Not that the devil didn't attack people before the Lord Jesus came. But we saw that in the coming of the Lord Jesus, there was much more demonic activity on earth. Wasn't there. There are some people who make the mistake and think that the level of demonic activity that you that you see during the life of Christ and during the ministry of Christ is one that was throughout history and that it even continues today.

But we do know that there is more satanic and demonic activity on earth today, ever since the coming of Christ, then there was before. How do we know? Well Revelation 12 told us that the war or the great battle that took place in the heavenly realms being over that Satan.

And his demons are much more fierce now that then they were before. But on the other hand in heaven, we have our advocate that, you know, the apostle talks in Romans 8 to that, who will bring a charge against God's elect. God is justifying and who will condemn, that Jesus are mediator.

Who is the one? Who condemns, who sits on the throne and hands out verdicts and sentences. That he is our, our advocate, our intercessor, our mediator, He stands for us and pleads his own blood for us. So what what you see at the beginning of Job with the accuser and the enemy of of the brethren of the people of God, having a regular or continual audience, in which he can bring accusation, that no longer happens in heaven.

So if you had to choose between fierce fiercer accusation in heaven with less battle on earth, and fear, battle on earth, with your mediator, sitting on the throne of heaven, You would definitely choose to be in the condition we are now, But just like we heard last week. Then the, the dragon, the serpent is continuing to make war on the woman and her children who who have the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony and who love not their lives, even unto death.

So this week, the first portion of the worship service is going to be from Ephesians 6 verse 10 through 18, which we which we have just read reminding and teaching us that the Lord has given us equipment for the battle. And the equipment for the battle is his own strength has own strength, especially by his word, and by prayer that his spirit is the one who strengthens us arms us by his word.

And His Spirit is the one who stirs us up to prayer. So that we will so that we will be engaged in this battle that we are in by the Lord's own strength. You don't have the choice of not being at war. When someone else is at war, with you, not fighting, is to lose.

Is to be easily slaughtered. This is something that in terms of human battle, There are some who don't understand. They think that we can just be friends with all our enemies, utterly foolish. And So it would also be in spiritual things So we don't get to be not at war, we don't get to pretend it away and it would be justice foolish.

If the battle is against those who are stronger than we are, it would be foolish justice foolish to fight in our own strength instead of God. That's why we can't come to the worship and just get a TED Talk about good. Advice about how to live better. It's why we have to have Christ preached to us and that's why that even when we do receive instruction we receive instruction by way of the preaching of his work because it is his word that he uses to give us a strength.

So and prayer. So let us see that. In the passage says, finally my brethren be strong in the Lord. And

in the power of His might put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the walls of the devil. Okay? So the reason to put on this armor is because this is the armor by which the Lord gives us to be strong with his own power, instead of hours which when you are reading your Bible day by day, paying attention, if any worship meditating upon his word day and night hearing his word and the assembly doing all those things and it doesn't seem to be going.

Well, don't be discouraged because the reason you're doing those things is not so that you could accomplish what you are aiming at, but is because God will accomplish what he is aiming at. And so, you press on in those things, So be strong in the Lord. And in the power of His might Why verse 12 for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, okay?

So the spiritual hosts of wickedness especially that have been cast down from the, heavenly places are the ones against whom we are constantly doing battle. Your flesh is bad enough by itself, isn't it? You're sinfulness from your original nature, but there are the invisible powers that are seeking to be aligned with your flesh against you against Christ against your new nature.

And so you shouldn't be surprised when sanctification when the mortifying. The killing of remaining sin is so difficult as such a battle because you are at war and you are at war. Not only with that, which remains from your original nature. Your fleshly self, but with actual hosts, armies of beings stronger than you in and of themselves.

Thankfully, you have God Himself in His and His power to fight, or to be strong. And the point is to stand verse 10, that you may be able to stand against the walls of the wicked of the devil. Sorry, verse 13. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

Okay? So just to be able to stand in the battle, You need the power of God. If we are not availing ourselves of the word and prayer independence, upon the Holy Spirit, then we will find ourselves back sliding, and battered and beaten, We won't even be able to stand when you're in battle against forces that are much stronger than you are.

Then you had better use the armor that God gives you independence upon the God who gives it. Because the only way that this battle can be waged is in his own strength. So he says, in verse 14, stand, therefore having girded your ways with truth. Okay. That's comes from the Bible, having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Well, how do you get righteousness? Well through faith in Jesus Christ by believing embracing him and the truth about him knowing that he is your righteousness and not your own works. Having shot your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, again words about Jesus, and what he has done upon above all taking the shield of faith.

Which is believing those words. Faith is not helping against all reason. Faith has content. Faith is about specific things. It's believing what God says and embracing him as he has described himself and what he has done. As he has described it with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and take the helmet of salvation.

And the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. So again, his saving us His, using his word and the spirit being the one who makes all of these things effective for us. So doing battle in your life, then the battle that you are engaged. In is really not very complex.

Remember, we keep saying this not complex, but difficult It's not complex. You take up the word of God and all that it tells you about him as our Savior in Jesus Christ. And the way that that is made effective for you, the way that you are enabled to put on all this armor to make use of all.

This armor is by the Holy Spirit's work, but it's not just the word. It's also prayer. Verse 18, praying, always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the same saints. And so prayer is the manner that this by which the spirit keeps us resting upon God.

Resting upon Christ and praying. Not only for ourselves, but for others. Notice the supplication for all the saints at the end of verse 18. So um, the spiritual warfare that we are in and if we had time to take to have gone through the whole book of Ephesians, which we did, I think concluding last year going back into 2020 as well.

We wouldn't have noticed that the great place that our battle takes place is in our marriages, in relationships between parents and children, as in our daily work, Masters and servants and so forth. So the Christian life is not some something that is way, way out there the Christian battle is not something that is way away out there.

And it is not something that is particularly complex, but it is difficult and it is waged in God's strength.

By proper use of gods word as we call upon God through prayer. And all of this sustained by the Holy Spirit. So we're at war. But we have the way of standing in the battle, which is God himself.

And we have the means by which he gives us to stand by his strength and that is, especially his word and prayer. So God grant that our lives would be full of studying, and believing meditating upon his word and lifting up our hearts to him in prayer, which will do now.

Let's spread.

Father, we thank you that you have seated, are redeemer, the Lord Jesus. Even in his glorified humanity, upon the throne of heaven and that you have given us your word as a means, especially used by your spirit in our lives, to make us strong with your strength for standing in the battle.

In which we find ourselves here on earth when we pray, that you would give us consistency and reading and thinking about your work and that you would powerfully use it and that you would make us to meditate upon what you say and cling to you. And we ask that you would make us consistent in prayer.

Calling upon your name, laying before you all our difficulty, all of our neediness and that your spirit would help us to pray. Even now we feel the truth of that part of your word that says we do not know what to pray for. As we ought and we thank you that your spirit helps us in our weakness.

For your graces, sufficient for us, and your strength is made perfect and weakness. When therefore, we exalt even in our weakness. Because when we are weak, Then we are strong and dependence upon you grant unto us to come out of the battle Victorious. Grant unto us even to know ourselves.

Now already more than conquers and you who have loved us and who have given Christ for us. We ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.