

EXPOSITION OF EPHESIANS

Message #20

Ephesians 6:10-18

In case you don't realize it or haven't realized it, **God wants us to know that life in the grace age is a struggle; in fact it is a war**. William Barclay said to the Apostle Paul "the whole universe was a battleground" (*Ephesians*, p. 182). The road from our salvation to heaven, spiritually speaking, is not easy. It is a road filled with twists and turns and struggles, setbacks and trials. We who know the Lord are in a difficult and dangerous situation here and we are in an intense warfare. Grace Age Christianity is not a "flowery bed of ease."

If we aren't careful, we can get spiritually and morally wounded. Satan is very aware of each of our weaknesses and we may be certain he has a strategic warfare strategy that is designed to personally attack you.

Every step we take in life carries with it the potential for a fall. We need to take the utmost care to see to it that we do not trip up. We must learn to depend on the Lord moment by moment and day by day.

The Apostle Paul was well aware of this in his own life and he wanted the Ephesians aware of this in their lives. This warfare survival is so important that it was the final topic Paul wanted to address before he ended this inspired letter. **In fact, you will notice the adverb that begins verse 10 is the adverb "finally."** This is the final key point that Paul wants to make in this grace exalting book of Ephesians. The point he wants to make is this:

GRACE AGE BELIEVERS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE SATANIC STRUGGLE AND WAR THEY ARE IN AND THEY NEED TO KNOW THE CRITICAL GRACE AGE KEYS TO VICTORY.

Now there is very critical data revealed here and we don't want to miss one word of it. The key to victory over satanic warfare does not come by us running around talking to or about Satan or trying to cast out Satan. There are three main keys to spiritual victory:

SPIRITUAL VICTORY KEY #1 – Understand our strength is in the Lord, not in us. **6:10**

The tense of the verb "be strong" is present. What that means is that our continual strength is not ever found in anything we do. It is not found in us or in a seminar or in a weekend retreat; it is found in the Lord. I love something Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said, "You notice the Apostle does not say, "be strong in human plans." He does not say "be strong in human methods." He does not say "be strong in the latest ideas" that sweep over the evangelical church, but "be strong in the Lord and the power of his might." He went on to say that the constant appeal to seminars on this or that is "an attack on the sufficiency of Holy Scripture"...and "an implicit attack upon the sufficiency of God" (*Ephesians* 6:5-24, p. 4).

Now what does not show up in English but does in Greek is that there are three different words used for “strength” in this one verse:

- 1) The verb “Be strong” (ενδυναμοω). The emphasis of this word is to make strong (p. 152).
- 2) The noun “strength” “in the strength” (κρατεω). The emphasis of this word is to be strong at a ruling, mastering and prevailing level (p. 256).
- 3) The noun “might” “of his might” (ισχυος). The emphasis of this word is to have powerful force and might (p. 220).

So Paul is saying that for us to become strong, to stay strong and to develop to the point where we are strong enough to prevail, we need to learn first and foremost that strength is found in the Lord and not in us.

God is strong, we are not. This point is dangerously overlooked by many Christians. They think their strength is in themselves or in a pill or in a counselor or in a baptism or a raising of a hand or walking an aisle. What they don’t realize is that as long as they think this way, Satan has them right where he wants them.

We will not get strong by anything we do; our strength is found in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said this “calls for an unceasing dependence upon God, in which dependence of all confidence in self is abandoned” (*Ephesians*, p. 141).

SPIRITUAL VICTORY KEY #2 – We need to put on the full armor of God . 6:10-13

The first thing that jumps out at us is that we cannot be victorious wearing partial armor. If we are going to survive the warfare, we need to put on the full armor of God.

I want us to immediately observe that it is God’s armor and not our armor. Now before Paul describes the armor, he starts **by giving three reasons why we need to put on the full armor of God.**

Reason #1 - We need to put on the full armor of God so we may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 6:11

The word “schemes” is methodia (μεθοδια) from which we get our English word “methodology.” It is a word that refers to systematic deceit and craftiness. The devil comes up with a specific systematic scheme and plan to attack the Grace Age believer and believers need the full armor of God in order to stand firm against those schemes. Notice the key to standing firm against him; having on the full armor.

Reason #2 - We need to put on the full armor of God because we are not fighting flesh /blood enemies, but dark, spiritual, satanic enemies. **6:12**

That word “struggle” (παλη) refers to a combat or fight or contest that we are in (Smith, p. 335). When one believes on Jesus Christ the fight begins. We are in a war. But notice carefully that we are not in a struggle against physical forces we can fight.

We are up against very powerful, dark, evil forces who are wicked, who are in the heavens. We cannot even physically see these evil forces at war against us and we certainly cannot fight something we cannot see.

Reason #3 - We need to put on the full armor of God so we can resist the evil and stand firm in the warfare. **6:13**

One of the key determining factors as to whether or not we are walking in close dependency on Jesus Christ or are wearing the full armor is that we will be able to “resist” evil when it satanically comes at us. That word “resist” (ανθιστημι) speaks of being able to withstand and oppose the evil attack.

Notice the text says stand firm after we have done everything. What is the everything we are supposed to do? **Put on the armor and realize our strength lies in the Lord and not in us!**

SPIRITUAL VICTORY KEY #3 – We need to stand firm in the full armor. **6:14-20**

There are times in our spiritual life when we need to run away from things and there are times when we need to stand. God does not rapture us the moment He saves us. His desire for us in this Grace Age is that we be good soldiers who take a stand and make a good fight for Him.

Now some say there are six pieces of spiritual armor; however, it seems to me there are seven. Now all except two of the pieces of armor are defensive, not offensive. **So our job is not to go on the offensive to attack Satan and his demons; our job is to defend ourselves against his attacks.**

Roman soldiers had a helmet, breastplate, shield, sword and sandals. Since Paul was in jail and chained to a soldier day and night, he probably was literally looking at a soldier or thinking about a soldier when he was led by God to write this. The actual order of the listing of the armor is given in the way one would actually put the armor on chronologically.

Now as near as I can determine, there are seven key pieces of armor we need if we are to survive this world as a God-glorifying, Grace Age believer.

Armor Piece #1 - Gird loins with truth. 6:14a

No soldier could fight without a girdle. Your clothes need to be tight to you to fight. If they are loose, you don't have a chance. The girding would take place by two long strips of leather or cloth that would cinch up the piece around the stomach area. This area protected a person from being cut or sliced in the mid section. Paul is basically saying truth is the first critical key to Grace Age protection.

The word "truth" (αληθεια) has to do with that which is true as opposed to that which is false (Smith, p. 20). Do not miss this; we must be people after truth if we are to wage a good war for God. We live in a world that gropes and makes guesses about various things, but we need to be soldiers who know and defend truth. A critical key to spiritual victory is being a person of truth. As a believer we must want to know God's truth, believe God's truth, defend God's truth and apply God's truth to our lives. A good soldier is truth-oriented and has truth integrity.

Strong soldiers are after truth. Truth governs the life of winning soldiers for Christ. Truth takes precedence over human reason, opinion, plans or methods. Truth takes precedence over religious traditions and denominational mandates. A good Christian soldier stands for God's truth.

Now of course one question is where do we find truth? We find it in the Scriptures. God's Word is truth. So it stands to reason if we are to be a good soldier, we must want to understand God's truth and we must believe it, stick to it and apply it. **A key piece of armor is that God-honoring, Grace Age believers will always be after truth.**

Armor Piece #2 - Put on the breastplate of righteousness. 6:14b

The word "righteousness" means to conform to the righteous standards of God and His Word. It is debated as to whether or not this refers to justifying righteousness or sanctifying righteousness. Well in all reality both are true. If we are to be a good, Grace Age soldier we must have imputed righteousness of justification and we must have the applied righteousness of sanctification. As one commentator said, "when a man is clothed in righteousness he is impregnable."

Good soldiers have a sanctified righteousness that squares with the Word of God after salvation. The breastplate protects a soldier from an attack to his chest. Sanctified, righteous living will guard the believer's heart from satanic attack.

Armor Piece #3 - Shod feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. 6:15

The word "gospel" means good news. So a good soldier will somehow use his feet to prepare himself in the good news of peace. What is the purpose of shod feet? The purpose is to protect feet that are in motion. It is a grasp of the grace Gospel that will enable a believer to walk through life at peace with God and at peace with himself. It will enable the believer to proclaim that grace message to the world.

So what this means is that the good soldier will prepare himself by understanding the good news that makes him at peace with God. The emphasis here is on preparation (ετοιμασία) and readiness. Good soldiers go to church to learn the Scriptures, specifically about the data that reveals the good news of how one may be both positionally and practically at peace with God. He prepares himself so that wherever he goes or walks, he is in a position to know and communicate truth.

Armor Piece #4 - Take up the shield of faith . 6:16

Satan is a master at creating doubt, especially when it comes to God, His Word and His truth. Believers need to always believe the Bible. Doubts can hit any believer. Lapses of faith can occur when hit with trials. That is when the good soldier implements his faith.

By the way, the Scriptures are clear that “faith comes by hearing the word” so when a good soldier has doubts, he will head for the place where he can hear the Word because that is the place where his faith will be strengthened. Believing the Word of God quenches the fiery darts of the devil.

Armor Piece #5 - Take up the helmet of salvation . 6:17a

What actually is salvation? Salvation means our sins are forgiven by believing on Jesus Christ. The helmet protects the head and brain. Paul says a good soldier focuses his mind on Grace Age salvation that his sins are forgiven by faith in Jesus Christ.

We live in a world that tries to convince people they can be saved by what they do or that they cannot be saved because they have been so bad. Do not miss this because this is a key to warfare victory. Our minds need to be totally riveted on grace salvation which means our sins are gone by faith alone in Christ alone. Do not focus your mind on your works, merit, law or religion. Focus your mind on the salvation you have that is found totally and completely in Jesus Christ. This is a major key to victory.

Armor Piece #6 - Take up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. 6:17b

The power we have is in the Word of God. We must know the Word of God if we are to be a good soldier who survives the warfare. Now I want to point out a couple of things. First, the noun “sword” (μαχαίρα) is a word that refers to a short sword or dagger as opposed to a large sword (Smith, p. 280). Second, the noun “word” (ρῆμα) is one that means the very words one uses or speaks (Smith, p. 397).

A key to being a good soldier is that we understand the very words of Scripture, but do not walk around carrying some giant sword, but rather are able to know and use it and communicate it in various warfare settings. We are to know and believe God’s Word in any given situation, and be able to understand it to the point we can communicate it.

When Satan came up against Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ was so familiar with the book of Deuteronomy that He could cite those references which made Satan flee. The more we know of the Word of God, the better fighter we will be.

Armor Piece #7 - We must be a soldier who prays at all times. **6:18**

William Barclay said when we come to this piece of armor we come to the greatest weapon of all—prayer (p. 184). Contextually, as we are taking up the Word of God we need to pray. Notice the emphasis here—we are to pray at all times. We are to be people of prayer. We need to be in tune with the Holy Spirit and when we are we will be a person of prayer.

Now if we put this in the armor context, in order to understand and apply the Word we must pray. We must be alert to this fact. We must pray for ourselves and pray for each other. We need to realize we are all in the war and we need to pray for each other.

We are in war. We need to be good soldiers in the war. We need to be able to survive this world and its satanic attacks and this text gives us the critical keys to victory.