

Prepare for War: We have an Enemy

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Bible Text: Ephesians 6:10-13
Preached on: Sunday, May 13, 2018

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We have the tremendous privilege and unique in many ways to be able to open the Scriptures in our own language and to examine them and to allow them to shape our thinking, and we get to look at the Scriptures ourselves and not mediated through a priest, not mediated through some special representative but given directly to us in our own language. So with that in mind, I would like to open up to the book of Ephesians 6 and as you turn there, I want to call us to give special attention to it this morning because this is something that we do week after week and it can become routine, it can become normal. We have so much access to online sermons and videos and all of these things, so much information that we can grow calloused to it and think of it as just a common thing, but this is a special moment in time to see and hear the word of God and to consider its impact and its importance for our life. So as we do that, as we look at that, I want to just beg you that you would desperately look to the Lord to teach you this morning. So let's pray and ask him to do that and he will. He will teach us.

Let's pray.

Father, we come to you because we are in desperate need of you. We come and we bring our petitions to you, we bring our hearts. There is so much going on in our lives and yet now, now is the time to sit at your feet to hear your word, to take it to heart and, Lord, I pray that you would soften us, you would focus us and that you would cause us to believe and to really take in what you're saying. May you be glorified in our hearts this morning. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

So it seems like a strange message for Mother's Day, doesn't it, this title to "Prepare for War." In honor of Mother's Day I'm calling all of us to prepare for war, but you know, it's interesting because and I didn't intend it for Mother's Day, but it's perfect because mothers are such a target of the devil's schemes, aren't they? The mother's role in the home is something that has been under attack probably since the beginning. The role of the mother in the home to raise children, to gut it out with snotty, disobedient, little helpless children who don't appreciate them, it's not glorious, it's not glamorous in the moment and they are exhausted and they've got vomit on their shoulder, and the world does not value that. It doesn't seem important and that is the devil's scheme to denigrate your role as a wife and a mother and he is attacking that right in your home. You have such an impact and such an important role and such an important work to do in the

raising of your children and in the loving of your husband and I just want to call you to that and that's all I'm going to say about mothers probably today, but this is really important for this.

So let me go ahead and read the book of Ephesians 6:10-13. Over the next three weeks, we're going to cover this topic of spiritual warfare under this heading, "Prepare for War." Today we'll cover verses 10 through 13, over the next three weeks total we'll cover verses 10 through 20. So let me read those first three verses.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 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 firm.

We see in this passage that we've been called to be strong. Whatever he's about to say requires a strength from us but it's not your strength. Your strength is not sufficient. It requires the strength of his might, of the Lord's might, okay? It requires his mighty strength and you think about how strong God is to create the universe and the expanse of all of the stars and the planets and all of those things, that is the strength that we are to be strong in. We are to be strengthened by him because what he is calling us to is too big for us. It's too strong for us. It requires too much power for us in our own flesh in ourselves to handle.

Verse 11 starts to explain how to be strong in the Lord. He says this, "Put on the whole armor of God." That's how you're strong. That's how you are strengthened. You put on the armor of God for this purpose. What is this? Why is this such a big deal? Why do we need all this power? It's so that we "may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." We have an enemy actively scheming against us who wants us to fall. Have you considered that? Have you considered that you are in a war zone? Have you considered that you have an enemy?

How would you live differently if you were in a war? How would you live differently if Providence Church, Duluth was in the middle of a war zone? Think about this. Think about what concerns you, what envelops you, what dominates your thinking in your life. What are you concerned about? What are you fearful of? What do you plan for? When you strategize your life and work things out, what controls that? What makes you anxious? What makes you angry? What makes you depressed? How would all of that change if now you found yourself in the middle of a war?

Are you prepared for that? Are you prepared to live as a soldier? It's one thing to be a civilian in a war zone but we see in Scripture that you are actually a soldier in this war zone. How does that change your mindset towards your life?

You see, I think that we are comfortable in our sort of Christian cloister where we come together and we hide out together. We hide out together, sorry, Rich gave me a look again. We interact with mostly Christians when we can help it and we want life to be easy. We expect it to be easy. We want sanctification to come easily. We want money to come easily. We want relationships to come easily. We want godliness to come easily. We want church to be easy. And we expect that.

It's really interesting, I've noticed this especially in working with many young men over the years and some older men as well, but when things don't come easily, when relationships, when in dating the girl doesn't, they get rejected, they get depressed. When they can't overcome sin in their lives, they get depressed and they lay down and they don't get up, they don't keep going and I think it's because they don't realize that they are in a war; that everything that they're striving for is just for their own happiness, their own accomplishment.

How would you live differently if you were in a war? If you realized that, how would your priorities change?

It was about 7:45 a.m. when anti-aircraft officer Benny Mott was startled by the sound of pilots' voices rising with alarm over the radio transmitter aboard the USS Enterprise, not Star Trek. 1941. They were shouting to one another, these pilots, "Hey, did you see that Army plane shooting at me?" The other pilot responded, "That's no Army plane, that's a Japanese plane. Look at the red circles on his wings." "I'm gonna shoot back," the other pilot responded, and this back and forth continued as the stunned Squadron 6 and the equally surprised Japanese pilots tangled in view of Pearl Harbor. Benny raced for the secret radar console between the flag bridge and the ship's bridge. He found Jack Baumeister, Enterprise radar officer, hidden behind a long black curtain. His heart pounding, Benny told Jack what he had heard on the pilots' frequency. "Can we get anything on the radar?" he asked. Perspiring, Jack leaned forward in his chair and peered at the cluster of echoing blips of unknown origin making their way across the screen of the ship's new radar machine. "It's strange," he said, "I've got a lot of bogies but I shouldn't be getting any." "Have you reported this?" Benny asked incredulous. Jack replied that he had, but his tone betrayed a lack of confidence in the new radar technology. By then, however, numerous planes had sent messages back to the Enterprise confirming the worst. Benny and Jack stood together staring at the screen, the top half seeming to crawl with ants. Within seconds, the ship's sirens screamed. The radioman had received an official coded message: "Enemy air raid on Pearl Harbor. This no drill." For the next two hours, the men listened with horror to the pilots' communications frantically going back and forth only to go silent as they were shot down. Benny lost two of his good friends within minutes of each other and the USS Enterprise survived the attack but four battleships were sunk among many others. Many ships were damaged and 2,400 men lost their lives along with 1,200 wounded. The very next day the United States declared war on Japan, inaugurating America's official entrance into World War II.

America had been caught off-guard and though there are many conspiracy theories as to why, one thing was clear: the fleet at Pearl Harbor was not ready for war and they should

have been. They should have been. There was enough chatter, there was enough communication from the Japanese and enough tension in the diplomatic relationship between the two countries that America should have known that they had an enemy and they should have been prepared but they weren't and the result was catastrophic.

Well, in our life, we have an enemy and God is calling us to be prepared. Here in Ephesians 6, I want to zero in a little bit on this phrase, verse 13, "take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm." That phrase, "having done all," it signifies a diligence, an intensity, a focus, a thoroughness, "having done all, to stand firm." You see, to stand firm against this enemy, it requires a full effort. Lazy soldiers will not make it. They will be enveloped, they will fall to the devil's schemes. You see, the Christian life is not one of ease, it is not one of comfort. The Christian life is not one of coasting, of let go and let God. You will find that idea nowhere in Scripture. The fact that it's hard and that it is difficult is normal. Don't let that discourage you. It will require great effort.

So what motivates this? Why should we prepare for war? I want to give you over the next three weeks three reasons. The first is that we have an enemy. That is the reality. We have an enemy. Reason 2 is that the enemy is coming. He is scheming against us and there will be an evil day in which you must face temptation and you must stand firm. The day is coming. The enemy is coming for you. And reason 3 to prepare for war is that we have a commission. We have a command from God to stand firm; to hold our ground. We will cover those things in the next couple of weeks but we have a command from God to stand firm in the face of this opposition and we have been given the tools necessary to do it but it will require diligence, it will require preparation.

So today we're going to focus on that first reason, the reality that we have an enemy. We have an enemy. The first thing we need to point out is that Satan is real. He's not a force. He's not an idea. He is a person. His existence is found in eight Old Testament books and 18 New Testament books. He's mentioned 74 times in the New Testament alone and every single New Testament writer mentions him at least once. After studying this, ignorance should no longer be an excuse for unpreparedness. Everyone engaged in a war studies their enemy and the more you know about your enemy, the better you will be prepared. You need to understand his character and his schemes and his goals. Today we're just going to focus on who is he and what does he want, but next week we're going to look at his schemes; how does he operate; what are his goals; what are his strategies; and how does he seek to exploit our weaknesses. You see, all of these things have been revealed. All of these things have been revealed to us in the pages of Scripture. We don't have to figure them out. We don't have to go to a special guru to get the answers. We don't have to go to some special spiritual person. God has given us the answers for these. And week three after we study his schemes, we will examine the strategy that God has given us to resist the devil and to stand firm. We will look at what that means and how to do it.

So today, the first reason to prepare for war is this, we have an enemy, and I want to highlight six characteristics of our enemy to prepare you for war. First of all, who is he?

He is personal. That is to say, he is a person. Evil is not a force, it's not a concept, but it is a person and is energized by an evil being. He is characterized in Scripture as having an intellect, emotion and will. He tempts and he schemes. He shows pride and anger. He conforms people to his will. His desire is to get people to do his will. He has intellect, emotion and will.

He goes by many names and designations. Satan in the Old Testament, which means adversary or one who opposes. It's used 18 times, this word to refer directly to him. The second most common word is the devil, which means slanderer. You know, when we slander, we are little devils. When we slander, we are like him. We are doing his will when we slander. He's called the serpent of old, Abaddon and its Greek equivalent Apollyon, which carry the idea of destroyer. He is the accuser, the adversary, the angel of the bottomless pit, Beelzebub, which means lord, prince of the demons. He's called Belial, which means vile, wicked or worthless. He is referred to as the great dragon in Revelation. The enemy. The evil one. Father of lies. God of this world. Liar. Lucifer, which means light-bearer. Daystar is another meaning for the word Lucifer. He's a murderer. Prince of the power of the air. Roaring lion and ruler of this world. And he's also called the tempter.

To drive home this point that he's actually a person, go ahead and look at Job 1:6-12. Let's go ahead and cut the screen, guys. We're having trouble. Job 1:6-12 says this,

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God [those are the angels] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." 8 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" 9 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." 12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

I want to notice a few things about this, that he is a person and he engages in conversation. He is a personal being. He's also limited by time and space. He came to the Lord and then he left the presence of the Lord. This is in contrast with God. He's not on par with God. God is everywhere. He is present in all places but Satan has to make an appointment to come to God, to enter into his courts, and then to exit. You also see from this that he can do nothing apart from God's allowing him to, and we will cover more about his schemes from here but you notice that he is bringing accusation against God's

children. God has accepted Job, God loves Job, Job is one of God's people, and Satan seeks to bring accusation, to put enmity between God and man.

Look at Matthew 4:1-11. It says,

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

And on he goes. Satan is a person. He engages, he has logic, he schemes and he has a conversation with Jesus trying to get Jesus to sin. Satan is a person. He's a real person, not a force.

Not only is he a person, but number 2, the second characteristic is he is spiritual. He's a spirit. We've already seen this in Job. He is a fallen angel. He's not a man. He's not something else. He's an angel.

The third characteristic is that he is ancient. The angels were all created at the beginning and they do not die and they don't reproduce, and so Satan and his demons were created. They were created by God at the very beginning during the creation week. Ezekiel 28:13 says that he was in Eden. He was in the garden of Eden. He was created at the beginning as an angel, as one of the sons of God, as the Old Testament terms them. He was beautiful and blameless. Listen to Ezekiel 28:15, it says,

15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.

So God created him. At the beginning he created him blameless. He created him perfect. He created him beautiful until the day that he fell.

The fourth characteristic is this: he is evil. He was created blameless but soon fell into the sin of pride. We already mentioned that in Ezekiel 28:15 but listen to Isaiah 14:12-13. It says,

12 "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.'"

He is evil. He opposes God. Isn't that amazing? He was created beautiful. It says, later we'll see he was the chief cherub. MacArthur termed him as like the, I heard MacArthur say he was like the worship leader of heaven; that he was the most powerful and most beautiful of the angels but he fell because he wanted the place of God. He wanted the worship that was due God. He wanted the power that God had. He wanted the angels to adore him. That is the very heart of evil right there, to desire the glory that is due to God.

And because he was jealous of God's glory, he raised a rebellion against God. What comes along with jealousy? When you're jealous and envious of someone else, what is your attitude towards the person that has what you want? It's hatred. It's anger. It's bitterness, isn't it? That is Satan's attitude towards God and everything he stands for.

And look at what he did. God created the world beautiful and perfect and he put on man the image of God, right? You and I are made in the image of God and so Satan hates you because you bear the image of God. He wants to destroy you. He wants to mar you. He wants to take you and turn you into something that despises and dishonors the Lord.

He is evil. Look at what he says in verse 13 of Isaiah that I just read, "I will raise my throne above the stars, I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north." Do you remember Isaiah 6 where Isaiah saw on the throne, seated on the throne the Lord and his glory filled the earth and the temple was filled with his glory and there were angels shouting to each other, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts! The whole earth is full of his glory!" Do you remember that? Matthew says that that was Jesus on the throne. The glory that Isaiah saw was Jesus Christ. Satan wanted to sit there instead of Jesus. He despises our Lord because of his glory, because he is raised, because he wants that for himself.

So not only did he want that and because of that he led a rebellion of angels, Revelation 12:4 talks about how he swept away one-third of the angels, and then opposed God's plan throughout history, and he is continuing to lead a rebellion. He seeks to destroy God's people. Go ahead and look at Revelation 12. So after verses 1 through 4, he rebelled against God, took the angels with him, wanted to destroy Jesus. Remember when Herod tried to kill all the children, he was motivating Herod to kill the children in Bethlehem and then verse 7,

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

So this war that's going on has been going on for a long time and it's bigger than you. It's bigger than me. This is a cosmic struggle between good and evil, not just good as an idea and evil as an idea, but between God and his good angels versus Satan and his evil angels. This is going on as we speak in the heavenly places. We don't even know the half of it.

So they fought against each other in verse 9,

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. 12 For this reason, [and we'll cover that stuff in the coming weeks, our victory] rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." [So he is thrashing about on his way down. We're in the middle of that.] 13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. [I'm not going to explain what all this means but this is the part I want you to see] 17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

That's you and me. He is enraged and he is making war against those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. He is evil and he wants the destruction of mankind and especially the destruction of those that belong to the Lord; those that have believed in him.

The fifth characteristic of this enemy is that he is powerful. He is powerful. In Jude 9, listen to Jude 9.

9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

Michael the archangel, he is the chief of the armies of God right now. Apparently the devil himself is stronger on a personal level than Michael the archangel. Michael has a certain respect for the power of the devil and he defers to God to deal with him.

It says in Timothy that the whole world lies under the sway of the devil. He is the power behind the throne. So we've already seen, well actually back in Matthew 4, we see the devil tempting Jesus with the opportunity that Satan could hand all of the kingdoms in the world to him. Satan says, "These all belong to me. I will give them to you if you worship me." The kingdoms of the world are under his sway, under his dominion for the time being. He is the power behind these thrones. In Isaiah 14, he is shown to be the power behind the king of Babylon. In Ezekiel 28, he is behind the king of Tyre. These evil kings. Ezekiel 28:13 and 15 says that he was once the anointed cherub, as we mentioned before, and he seems to have some control over weather, disease and evil people.

Look at Job 1:13. It says,

13 Now there was a day [this is talking about Job's sons] when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword

So the devil goes to God and says, "Yeah, sure Job worships you and serves you because you made him really wealthy and his life is easy. You take all that stuff away, he won't serve you anymore." So God says, "Okay, go ahead. Touch his possessions." So Satan goes to make this happen, to take these possessions from Job, and how does he do it? He uses these people called the Sabeans, just a people group, and somehow he influenced them to come and to strike down his servants with the edge of the sword and to steal his stuff. So he has control over evil people.

Look at verse 16 of chapter 1.

16 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them

So somehow, of course with God's permission, Satan caused fire to fall from heaven. Maybe that was a volcanic eruption. Who knows what it was. Was it lightning? I don't know but some sort of natural event consumed the sheep and the servants.

Verse 17,

17 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans [which were the ancient Babylonians] formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them

So those people were under Satan's influence.

Verse 18,

18 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead,

So we've got evil people, we've got natural events. I don't know if it was a tornado, just a stiff wind. Who knows but some seemingly natural appearing event caused the deaths and this was brought against Job to try to make him reject and curse God.

Then Job 2:7,

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Sometimes he seems to use disease. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul had a thorn in the flesh that he referred to as a messenger of Satan. Of course, God allowed it so that Paul would be humbled, but he calls it a messenger of Satan causing him trouble. Was it the Corinthian church? We don't know what it was but something was causing him trouble and it was a messenger of Satan. 1 Thessalonians 2:18 says that Satan hindered Paul from visiting the Thessalonians. Somehow he hindered Paul's plans. Revelation 2:10 says that Satan is about to cast some of you into prison. Somehow he had control over the sort of municipal authorities, the local authorities who controlled the prisons and the jails, the governments. Then Hebrews 2:12 says that the devil had the power of death and through the fear of death he enslaves people.

Satan is powerful. He's very powerful. Can you control the wind or can you cause disease? Can you control governments? No. You and I personally are no match for him but he's not alone. He's powerful by himself but he's not alone. Ephesians 6:12 talks about a whole host of powerful demonic allies: rulers and authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. These are all different words to express the same reality that there are supernatural demonic powers arrayed against us. They are under Satan's command and control. Luke 4 refers to them as unclean spirits. Luke 8 as evil spirits. 1 Corinthians 10:20 says that idols, people who worship idols are worshipping demons. Somehow these demons have influence over world religions. I don't know how they do it. Somehow in the minds and the hearts of unbelievers, they influence world religion and those that worship those false gods are worshipping demons, which falls right in line with what Satan wanted all along, to receive the worship that was due Christ. Demons, it says, can possess unbelievers. You see it in the Gospels many times. Unbelievers are possessed by Satan. One man was made blind and mute by a demon. Another was thrown into convulsions. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 says that they influence false teachers who disguise themselves as good people, as angels of light, just like Satan does. 1 Timothy 4:1 says that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

We need to make a note at this point that with all this talk about spiritual warfare and the spiritual realm, it is not healthy to speculate as to the exact hierarchy of demonic forces. No human knows the hierarchy and the system and the organization of demonic forces. They don't have them all listed out with an organization chart, you know? There are people that believe that they do. There are people that will tell you the whole exact hierarchy of, "Okay, rulers do this and authorities do this and cosmic forces do this." We don't know any of that and anyone that says that they do is lying to you.

Jude talks and 1 Peter talks about that, these people that go on about their visions, about these speculations about things in the unseen realm and claiming to have personal authority over these demons and reviling them and blaspheming those angelic beings. In arrogance they do this. These are false teachers that do this. We don't know these things. We don't have personal authority and we don't have personal knowledge of the way that the demons operate. All we know is what God has revealed to us. To claim anything other is pure fantasy and it is a distraction from our call to stand firm against their schemes. There is an unseen realm out there but their tactics have been revealed to us, they're not a mystery, and our strategy is not a mystery. It's actually very simple and we will cover it in the next couple of weeks. It's not like trying to create a fusion bomb to defeat Satan, okay? This is not some deep knowledge. It's very very simple and it has been given to us.

So what is it that these angelic demons, these powerful enemies want? What is it that they want? This is from the book "Biblical Doctrine" by Richard Mayhew and John MacArthur. "Satan's chief activity in the lives of Christians is to cause them to think contrary to God's word and thus act disobediently to God's will." They want Christians to think contrary to God's word and act disobediently to God's will. What is God's will? Let me just summarize it from the book of Ephesians. His will is that you would be saved by grace through faith alone, not by works. His will is that you would be holy and blameless before him; that you would do the good works that he has prepared for you beforehand that you should walk in them; that you would walk worthy of the calling; that you would understand his love and therefore walk in a way that is equal to that: humbly, gently, patiently bearing with one another and eagerly pursuing unity. These are the things Satan opposes. God's will is that you would exercise your spiritual gifts for the building up of the body, by speaking the truth in love; that you would put off the old man along with its deceitful lusts and that you would put on the new man made in the image of Christ. This is God's will. That means being honest. That means giving rather than stealing. That means reconciling and edifying and forgiving. That you would walk in love, imitating Christ, putting away all sexual impurity and covetousness, drunkenness and foolishness, and that you would be filled with the Spirit, singing godly songs and giving thanks. This is God's will for you. This is what Satan does not want you to do. That wives would submit to their husbands as people being filled by the Spirit. That husbands would lay down their lives for their wives, and that they together would bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and that children would honor their parents. This is his will. That masters would treat those that work for them justly and fairly and well, and that those workers, servants and slaves, that they would sincerely work for the good of those who have authority over them. This is God's will for you. This is what they

oppose. This is what they want to destroy and hinder and they want to hinder the Gospel from going forward.

So the sixth characteristic of our enemy is this: that he is a schemer. He is scheming against us. He is making war. He wants to bring you down. He is coming up with creative ways to get you to not do those things that I just mentioned. He wants to lie to you. He wants to bring temptation to bear upon your flesh and your own desires, and we will get into that next week.

So in conclusion, I want to remind you that we are to be prepared to face this enemy, this ancient, powerful, evil angel; to recognize the reality that war is upon you and has been going on for some time; and you will feel the heat of this war as you attempt to live according to the will of God. It will be difficult. Expect it. Expect it to be hard because if you're not living in opposition to Satan, he will not bother you. If you are not doing God's will, Satan doesn't mind. But if you are actively pursuing the righteousness of God and proclaiming his Gospel to set sinners free from the kingdom and the domain of darkness, then Satan will oppose you and so be prepared.

So as we look to the future weeks, the reasons to be prepared, to remind you, the enemy, we have an enemy, the enemy is coming, and number 3, we have been commanded to stand firm. So with all of that, let's pray because and I don't want to leave you, in case anyone doesn't make it back for this, God is way more powerful than anything Satan can bring your way and his weapons are powerful and all you have to do is strap on his armor and live his way and you will be able to resist the schemes of the devil, but you must do it God's way and in his strength.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we come to you as the one, the only one who is more powerful than Satan and you are infinitely more powerful. He can do nothing outside of you allowing him to. And Lord, you have given us everything. You wore that armor yourself and you have conquered all of these evil forces, Lord, and so now it has fallen to us to wear your armor and to overcome that same opposition and so, Lord, I pray that you would help us, motivate us, and I pray that we would look at the world differently; that we would see the war; and that we would prepare for battle; that you would be glorified in us. Lord, keep us from discouragement and despair even when we fail, that we would rise up, put on your armor and get back in the fight. And Lord, I pray specifically as it is Mother's Day that the mothers here would see their temptations towards discontent, towards bitterness, towards exhaustion, the desire to get away from what you've called them to do, Lord, that they would resist that temptation and resist the world's lies and that they would engage in the battle with your strength and armor, that their husbands, that their children would see a woman who is also a warrior for you and that they would be able to follow that example. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.