

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 6

Message 95

Date: 7/11/2021

Words: 5858

Scripture: Ephesians 6:11

INTRO: In the last message we began looking at the text of Paul's last point in his letter to the Ephesians. He deals with the battle of the Christian. It is an interesting addition to the letter because it is not directly related to the rest of the letter by subject. The relation one might draw is that Paul, in the last half of the letter gave many instructions to the believer. And if the believer will seek to obey those instructions, without doubt, he will meet the demonic forces.

Think of Ephesus, where they had never known the true God and had worshipped the goddess Dianna. Every kind of sin was practiced in this city. And when Paul arrived there, some of the Ephesians got saved and you can imagine what they faced. And now Paul has written to them and taught them doctrine in chapters 1-3 and then taught them how to live as Christians. And if they will live like that in this culture, without any question, they will meet the demonic forces. And now, in this final point Paul will tell them how to overcome these forces.

In verse 10, he told them what to do. He said, "Finally, my brethren, be enabled in the Lord, even in the power of His might." Now in verse 11 he will briefly tell them how to do that. It is like this: "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." And in verse 12 he tells them why that is necessary. It is this: "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."

This morning we want to look at how to overcome the wicked one. I mentioned in the last message that verses 10-12 are like the headlines. Later he will deal with this in much more detail. So, how then were these Ephesian believers to overcome the forces of darkness?

b. How to do it (11)

After looking at verse 11, our big question is, how can I tap into the great might of God's power? Well, Paul is usually careful to give

instructions how to do that which he expects done. That is what verse 11 will now tell us in brief and then later in much more detail. Here is how:

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

We begin with the command to put on the whole armor of God. In verse 10 we noted that the command to be strong was passive and should read "be strengthened," or "be enabled." I gave the illustration of knee surgery. If the doctor says, "You should have your knee replaced," the verb is passive. That means somebody else must do it to me.

But in order to obey the command I need to do several things first. I need to give the OK to have it done. Then when I have an appointment with the doctor I must go see him and go through all the procedures and finally go and be in his presence so he can do the replacement.

So Paul has told the believer to be strengthened in the Lord. The Lord must make the believer strong. But before the Lord can do that, the believer has to go through the right steps in order for the Lord to do that. If the believer does not follow these steps, the Lord will not be able to strengthen him. And it is these procedures that Paul will give us now.

So here is what the believer has to do: "Put on the whole armor of God." If the believer does not put that armor on, neither will the Lord be able to strengthen the believer.

Now look at the words, "Put on the whole armor." The words "Put on" are a command. We saw earlier that verbs have tense, that is time. The tense here, is what we would usually see as a past tense, but in the original, as I see it, the idea expressed by it is the believer is to "begin to put on." How do you get strengthened in the Lord? Well, you begin to put on the whole armor of God.

But the voice is interesting. In English we have two voices for a verb; active and passive. In the language of the NT there are three voices, and the one we don't have is when one does something to oneself. This is called the middle voice in the original language, and that is what we have here. What that means is you have to put the armor on yourself. We cannot strengthen ourselves, but we can, and must put on the armor ourselves. I cannot replace my own knee, but I can have somebody else do it to me. Each individual believer must put this armor on himself.

Here is the picture: When you enter the army of a certain country, they will give you what you are to put on. But they don't put it on you. You do that every day you go to work. The army provides the armor, but you put it on yourself. When we become Christians, the Lord provides the armor, but we must put it on ourselves. And when we have the armor on, He empowers us to defeat the wicked one.

Now note the word "armor." The word for armor here is *panoplia*. This word begins with *pan*, which means *all*. The second part of this word, *hoplon*. This includes the armor of shield, sword, lance, helmet, greaves, and breastplate and boots.

Then we note that it is the armor of God. When one enters an earthly army, the army supplies the equipment. You bring the body that wears the equipment. When one enters God's army, He supplies the equipment, but the believer must put it on. So it is the armor supplied by God or which comes from God.

We must stop here now and ask: how different is the armor of the Christian than the armor of the world? What is different about this armor? Let us set that out from our passage. In our passage, the armor of the world is shown by the armor of the Roman soldier:

The world's soldier is girded with a good belt.
The Christian is girded with Truth!

The world's soldier has a metal breastplate.
The Christian's breastplate is righteousness!

The world's soldier has tough army boots.
The Christian has the Gospel of peace.

The world has a good strong shield.
The Christian's shield is faith.

The world's soldier has a tough helmet.
The Christian's helmet is salvation.

The world has a sword, a gun, a cannon, a bomb.
The Christian has the Word of God.

May I ask you, how do you like that picture? May I draw you another picture? Here is the King of kings and the Lord of lords in battle. He is in Gethsemane in prayer and Judas and the religious leaders and the Roman soldiers come and they take the King of kings, and the Lord of lords and they tie up His hands and they lead Him to judgment. And they slap Him in the face and spit on Him and pull out His hair. They judge Him unfit to live and nail Him to the cross and let Him hang there until He dies.

And there, right there, at the greatest moment of human defeat God established the kingdom of the King of kings. In weakness, He becomes King. This is the armor of God. Three days later, something that takes more power than all the doctors in the world can muster, He rose from the dead! Forty days later, he lifted off this earth and ascended into heaven!

After Judas and his band of Roman soldiers and the religious leaders came to take Jesus, and they had brought Him before the religious leaders and then He was taken to the Roman ruler, listen to part of the conversation of the Roman ruler with Jesus:

33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again,

called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

34 Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"

35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

Jesus was wearing the belt of truth. The world belittled truth. The world sneers at the truth today, but I assure you that in the end, it will prevail.

Listen to Hebrews 2:10:

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Listen to 1 Corinthians 1:26-29:

26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

27 *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;*

28 *and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,*

29 *that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

Who would think you could set up a kingdom by dying? When Jesus said to the Roman Pilate, "If My kingdom was of this world, My servants would fight," He means with sword and spear. His servants do fight, but it is with a different sword.

Listen to Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5:

4 *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,*

5 *casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,*

In one of our recent Bible studies, we got on the topic of how pastor's should respond to churches being shut down because of covid19. We considered the two pastors in Calgary. The one put up a storm and the other silently went to jail. Then we read the following:

Acts 8:32:

32 *"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth."*

And then 1 Peter 2:21-24:

21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

22 *"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth";*

23 *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

24 *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.*

Then we asked this question: Which pastor gave a better picture of an example of our Lord?

All through the OT God's people needed to learn that even in their physical battles it was the Lord's battle. Turn to 1 Samuel 17. You will know how young David was sent to the warfront to bring some things from his father to his brothers who were in the army. You will remember how Goliath roared day after day, "Send me a man to fight with me. If he wins, we will serve you. If I win, you will serve us."

You know the story how Saul finally let David go up against the Philistines. He had provided David with armor. But God had a message for the Philistines, for Saul and the army of Israel, and for us. So we begin in verse 38:

38 *So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail.*

39 *David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them." So David took them off.*

40 *Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his*

hand. And he drew near to the Philistine.

41 So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield went before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking.

43 So the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

David could not wear the armor Saul provided. It is not fit armor for the Christian either. And I want you to notice what Goliath thought of David's armor. He said: "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" Let me ask you, what does the world think of this armor? What does it think of righteousness; the Gospel of peace; faith; salvation; the Word of God? But let me ask you, what do you think of it?

Verse 44:

44 And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

I ask you, what do you think of this ruddy kid, with a sling?

Verse 46:

46 "This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in

Israel.

47 "Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into our hands."

May I ask you, whose is the battle? Never belittle the armor of the true Christian. The battle is the Lord's. We are best off with His armor.

-stand

Now look at our text again. It says:

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Why should we be empowered in the Lord? It is that we might be able, 'to stand.' We may make the observation here that if we are not enabled in the power of His might, we will not be able to stand. I have seen a good number of professing Christians fail of their stand in one thing or another. Some of the most powerful forces against the Christian's stand are peer pressure and family pressure. Even adults largely shape their lives by peer pressure.

-There are priority stands

There are first of all, priority stands every Christian must make. The Christian has to stand on major doctrinal matters. These are doctrines that must never be given up, such as the doctrine of the God of the Bible and the deity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ. There are a good number of others as well. These are non-negotiables.

Then there are moral issues. These are such things as are listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, which says:

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.

Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

It may be that not long from now the Bible will be called hate literature for such verses, and those who quote those verses or take a stand on them may be jailed for it in our own country of Canada.

Our Prime Minister's Liberal party is now proposing Bill C36. Listen to part of it in point (1) (c):

(1) A person may, with the Attorney General's consent, lay an information before a provincial court judge if the person fears on reasonable grounds that another person will commit

(c) an offence motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other similar factor.

If someone dislikes you and would like to get rid of you, they could turn you in, not on the basis of what you did, but on the basis of what you might do. And on that ground you could be charged as guilty of an offense against Canadian law.

It may be that not too long from now you or I could be jailed for what someone thinks we might do or say about the gender issue etc... Some time ago we considered we might have to leave this country because of proposals regarding education. Now there may be even more serious things on the horizon.

Why does Paul wish us to be enabled in the power of God's might? Do you remember the word for "to be strong" or "to be strengthened" or "enabled"

in verse 10? It was *dunamis*. Now look at the words in verse 11 "might be able." It comes from the same word. It could be literally translated like this: *Put on the whole armor of God to be enabled to stand against the wiles of the devil.* Putting on the armor enables one to stand, but the enabling is so that we will be enabled to stand. In other words, if we put on the armor God will enable us to stand, but we have to choose to stand.

I fear that as Christians, the past ease of life we have experienced since World War II has lulled us to sleep. I read an article from the Western Journal called: "Shock: Americans ditch biblical worldview for 'fake Christianity.'" Here is what it said in part: 'American Christianity has fallen. Thanks to cultural corrosion and a lack of biblical literacy, a new 'fake Christianity' has raked the dry ground of the American church.

"This counterfeit religion is moralistic therapeutic deism, a worldview that has quickly gained prominence and given many Americans a theology that looks nothing like historical Christianity, despite what they may claim.

"George Barna, director of research at Arizona Christian University, said MTD -- or 'watered-down, feel-good, fake Christianity' -- is 'the most popular worldview in the United States today,' according to [Christianity Daily](#). A recent [poll](#) conducted by ACU found that 38 percent of adults hold this view' end quote.

Let me give you one example of what taking a stand on some modern positions does. Take the acceptance of divorce and remarriage by Christians, for example. Three humanist manifestos have been written; the first in 1933, the second in 1963 and the last in 1999. Humanist manifesto II said, and I quote: "In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth

control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized." That was 1963. In 1968 divorce was legalized in Canada.

Today, if you take a stand against divorce in the church and obey 1 Corinthians 5, you are too narrow for at least 90+% of evangelical Christianity. Most would agree it is not a good thing, but few believe it bars you from salvation unless you repent of it and get out of it. If you take a stand and obey the Bible, you will experience hardship, even among Christians.

-Personal stands

Then there are personal stands. Turn to Romans 14. I won't take time to read the whole chapter, but Romans 14 deals with such issues as diets and days. We won't take time for it. This needs several messages. But some believe you have to keep certain days, and others do not. Some believe you need to abstain from certain foods and others do not.

Then there are such things as dress or radio or TV or the internet. What is acceptable? In the previous message I mentioned clothing. Every Christian needs to determine before the Lord what is acceptable. For dress the general principle of modesty applies universally. How that applies in various cultures must be determined by the Christians in those cultures.

It is important to recognize the difference between personal stands and non-negotiables. With regard to personal stands, Romans 14:5 says, "Let each be fully convinced in his own mind."

When one takes a stand on non-negotiables, these are things that one should insist that everyone who names the name of Christ should hold to. When it comes to personal stands, one needs to be generous with others. All of this takes great wisdom.

-wiles of the devil

Last in our verse, Paul speaks of the wiles of the devil. I'll read the verse once more:

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Now our battle is against the devil and his forces. We have mentioned already that if one goes to battle against another, one needs to understand the mind of the opposition. The more you understand your opposition, the more likely you are to win.

Let me quote here from another message I did on this subject: *"The Greek word for wiles here is methodias. It is not hard to see what English word we get from this word. It is methods. It is instructive that the word "wiles" is in the plural. He does not simply use one method. The methods are multitudinous and they are masterfully employed. Just when you have one thing conquered in your life another comes along. And it seems that with Christian maturity come different methods.*

A method is a manner or way of proceeding with something which is according to plan. For example, in the world there are many kinds of diseases and sicknesses. I have heard that the doctors have a way they use to determine what method will be the best to deal with a particularly difficult case. They have what is called the round table. A number of doctors meet. The case is given and then these doctors discuss the matter and come up with the method that will be used in that particular case.

I think that gives us a good picture of what may happen in the spiritual world. Picture with me this morning, a round table of demons. This day it is you or I that is the case. You or I are discussed. Our weaknesses are discussed. Suggestions are made. Demon so or so has the case and what he wants to do is destroy us (John

10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill and to destroy..." And so our every weakness is considered. Our strengths are considered. Various methods are considered. Some are eliminated and some are considered further. And when everything has been discussed, all the pros and cons have been considered, the decision is made to attack with such or such a method.

And now there we are. Like Job or like Peter...we are totally unaware of what has happened in the spiritual realm. Our day begins beautifully and then before noon, every kind of difficulty seems to have set in. By evening we are so discouraged we hardly know what to do. Tomorrow is Sunday and somehow every feeling resists the idea of going to church and so we sleep in. And then you talk with someone. They are from the same church and they speak negatively about so and so. The seeds of Satan are going deeper and deeper.

Sunday comes and we stay home. And then we stay away for two weeks and so on. Our Bible reading begins to die away. Our prayer life begins to slip. Everything is going according to plan. The methods or schemes of the evil one are working. And then, lo and behold, you or I meet up with another Christian. This is a spiritual Christian and he or she detects something amiss and talks to us about the Lord. We still have no idea of what is going on but something is changing. And then a deep longing sets in for peace with God and the long and short of it is that we come back on track.

Did the case I set out seem to be too fantastic to be true? Read the book of Job. And listen again to our text, "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Not only will what I have described happen to many, but one person will go through hundreds possibly thousands of attacks from the evil one. And for this reason Paul writes, "Finally my brethren, be empowered 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 wiles of the devil." The empowering of God is to enable us to stand against the well thought out schemes of the devil. End quote.

When we were on holidays recently we listened to David Jeremiah. He said that demonism is sharply on the rise in our day. I believe that is not because the devil is more active today than before. Satan's activity was largely hindered in the years when secular objective truth became sought after by the world, as well as by the Church. There are some things that cut his activity down. Whenever truth is important, whether to the world or the Christian, Satan is largely hampered. Think of how great a door is opened to him when you have LGBTQ set on a pedestal in society. Satan now gains new inroads into people's lives wherever such teaching prevails. If there is a sharp rise in demonism, it is due to a sharp drop in matters such as truth. Any logical person should be able to see through such things as LGBTQ.

But this pastor spoke of Satan's method of making people indifferent. Then he talked about ignorance. How many Christians are ignorant of important spiritual truths? How many are ignorant of Satan's devices? He talked about Satan's scheme of overstimulating our minds. I listened to a short clip by John Lennox, one of the great Christian thinkers of today. And here is what he said:

"Our lives rush past. They become fixated on digital equipment that's robbing us of time. People say to me they've no time; they've loads of time. If you want to know how much time you have just ask yourself, how much time have I spent in the last week fiddling with a piece of digital equipment and doing things that have no relevance to my profession whatever or my life and then say, have I got any time? We're robbing ourselves of the most important thing in life

and that is seeking fellowship with God in His Word. You will never make any impact in this world by reading the Bible for 5 minutes before you jump into bed. And I'm brutally practical. You husbands will never make any impact on the world if you are not praying with your wives and leading your families spiritually. You just won't. It's just not possible to develop a deep relationship within a family that's not triangular, that is, it doesn't include Jesus Christ at one corner. And we can seek to repent of these things and really begin to make time so that, in that sense, we get to know God.

"I used to think that science and all of these arguments were much more interesting than the Bible. And I discussed it with my mentor David Gooding and he said, 'Would you like to do a Bible study?' He invited me to do one. One night transformed my life completely in Cambridge, where I, for the very first time met a person that took the Bible seriously."

Well, he went on to say that it takes work. And he challenged professionals and said, "Think of all the work you have to do to get to where you are. Now if God has given you that kind of a mind, how much are you using it on Him? And what worries me silly, is people who rise in their professional career like that' (and he made a sign of a steep climb, and then he said) 'and their knowledge of Scripture remains on a basic baby Sunday school level.' So the moment their peers raise a question, they instantly detect they've not thought it through. And that silences them, often forever, sadly to say. So it's a clarion call and I think it is a way of pushing against this tide of mediocrity, where we don't take God's Word seriously. So what that tells me when I find it in my own heart is that I don't really love God."

He went on to say that he had a very good friend. And they agreed that whoever died first, the other would speak at the funeral. Well, Lennox friend thought he would die first, since he was older, but the friend called him one day and told him he had a tumor the size of a

grapefruit and he was going to die and he said you have to take my funeral. I said to him, "What shall I say?" Without hesitation he said, "Tell them to do what we did as students at Cambridge; to pour over the Word of God prayerfully and wait on God until His face appears." And he added then and said, "And then they will have something to say."

Last Sunday I mentioned issues affecting men, and issues regarding dress for women. If, as a Christian, one learns the wiles of the devil, surely every man will be careful with his eyes; surely every woman will be careful how she dresses. But so many times we are not even aware of what is happening.

David Jeremiah mentioned things like keeping people busy with non-essentials. Keep them from family time. Slog their mailboxes. Put glamorous things before them. Keep them self-sufficient and other things. How many times do we not even realize we are being led by the devil like a lamb to the slaughter? Then the devil may use discouragement and anxiety and worldliness and peer pressure and a host of other things, and slowly our spiritual life is drained of any power.

Some other wiles of the devil are such things as discouragement, anxiety, and worldliness, and sports. These are just a few of the wiles of the devil. Do Christians get caught up with such things and many more? You see, if Satan cannot keep us from becoming Christians, he may be able to keep us powerless. A powerless Christian is not a threat to him, and many times such a Christian may even become a help to the powers of darkness.

CONCL: So we conclude. Life is very, very serious. There comes a time when death overtakes us. After we die we cannot go back and change anything. Last week I mentioned the lady who said if she could talk to young ladies who are getting married, she would advise them to wear such clothing as would not cause them to be

ashamed some years from now. How about living life to the very best of our ability, so that we will not have to look back and regret what we have done. It is true that we can be forgiven for many things, but we can never redo those things that are past.

As Christians we need to take stands on that which is right. As a preacher, I am to preach the truth. For a good number of years I have said that a government official or the police had never been in my office yet because of my preaching. I now see that if I preach much longer it is highly likely that I will have just such a visit. The day may soon be here when you or I will be turned in by those we thought were friends.

We need to learn to stand now, so that when that time comes, we are ready to stand on things that will really cost us. One of the wiles of the devil is intimidation. Goliath's roar for forty days had Saul and his army totally intimidated. Just such a time may be before us not too long from now. We need to be enabled now so that we will be able to stand. The devil has a much freer rein with our political leaders than in the past.

Today I sense the net closing around us. The wiles of the devil may come to where the Christian is made to look horrible to a world that has rejected moral truth. The Christian may be put in a squeeze where even other so called Christians come down on them.

We will never do better than to put on the whole armor of God. We will not do better than to trust in the Lord and walk uprightly before Him by being enabled in the power of God's might because it is only here we really begin to understand evil and the forces that are arrayed against us.