

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 6
Message 98
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INTRO: In Ephesians 6:13 the first part of the verse we are told how to defeat the devil in general. Here it is:

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

You will remember I recommended a period after the word "day." When I read verse 13 in its entirety and end the verse as it does, it just grates on grammar. It attaches a complete clause to a participial phrase with the conjunction *and*. The conjunction *and* always connects words or phrases or clauses of equal rank. A participial phrase has no subject, and a clause does. So the sentence in our text as it is normally translated, is incomplete. If I am missing something, and some grammarian listens to this message, please let me know. As the sentence reads ending at the end of the verse, to me, it is like playing 7 notes on a piano to a musician and then stopping. That grates on any musician's ears.

Now let me cut the sentence off after the word *day*, and then begin a new sentence:

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, end of sentence.

New sentence:

13 And having done all, to stand,

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Structuring the sentence like that, the first thing Paul tells us to do is to stand. Like the soldier cannot expect to be able to stand without putting on all his armor, so the Christian cannot expect to stand without putting on the whole armor of God.

b. How to defeat the devil - The particulars

(13c-20)

1) What to do - Stand! (13c-14a)

So we begin now with the command to stand. Let us begin then with the words, "And having done all to stand, stand therefore..." The command is to stand. But the command is in the context of first having done all to stand. This context is given in the rest of the passage. A new believer has no time to sit around. A new believer needs to learn to read the Bible and learn truth from the Word of God. Here we have no little task. In every generation, every local situation, every circumstance in life, the new believer will need to learn what is important to the Christian life in his or her particular sphere of living.

Now, let me make a few observations from our passage: First, in order to stand, we need to do all that is necessary to stand. That is, we need to put on the whole armor of God. There are different ways to express this, but learning the basics is essential for every believer. Those basics take place when we have worked out all and have put everything in place in our armor in order that we might be able to stand.

Second, we can learn that we might put on the whole armor of God and still not stand. We cannot put on the whole armor, and then sit back and say, "Now I am safe from the evil one." When we have been enabled to stand by putting on the whole armor of God, now we must make use of this armor. The soldier who has put on all the armor for battle, does not just stand there with his armor on. He fights to remain on his feet in the fight. The wrestler who enters the ring does not just stand there because he is fully trained. He now uses all his training to remain standing as he fights. When we are

fully prepared to stand as Christians, now we will face every pressure to cave and to bow and bend, and then the devil will seek to break us entirely. So now we must make use of this equipment and stand.

So consider again the Olympic wrestler. Before he enters a wrestling match, he will get ready. It will take months of practice. It will take great discipline to get his body in shape, and a lot of work to become strong. He will study how others fight. He will do everything he can before he steps into the ring. He will learn the tricks of the trade. And when he is ready, and he steps into the ring, he can't just stand there and trust in all his training to win the fight. He has to put everything he has done to prepare for the fight into use. He will need every last thing he has learned, or he will be on the mat.

The same holds true for the soldier. No army will send out men to fight who have not been trained to fight. But their training alone does not assure them of victory. Once in battle, now they must use all their training.

So Paul says, "And having done everything to stand, stand therefore..." Once we are enabled to stand, now we must stand. This is what we have been enabled for. The wrestler does everything he does for one special time. He will have spent many painful hours getting ready. And he does all this for a very special time, and that is the time of the match. In a very short time he can be on the floor and lose the fight.

The soldier, likewise, will have gone through many drills. He will have endured many unpleasant practices and disciplines. But in a very short time, when he is standing toe to toe with a well-trained

enemy, he may lose his life. He may lose simply because his belt came undone.

The Believer must spend time preparing to stand as well. The believer does so, so that when he meets the evil one in the evil day, he is prepared to stand. The believer might meet an evil day that lasts for some time. Some believers have such horrible attacks in life that the evil day comes in waves. There is a little lull in the battle and then the attack is there again, and again, and again.

I am honored to have known believers who stood and still stand in the storm. For them, the battle came in waves with very little sunshine in between storms. I have seen them. I have seen them stand in the fiercest of storms. I have seen them abroad. One of the greatest honors of my life was to sit among Egyptian believers, where there were children who had seen their dad beat their mother until she ended up dying in the hospital. How many things they have endured by now could hardly be numbered. Every day might be a new battle.

But I have seen believers cave to doctrinal error in a very brief battle. I have seen believers fail in moral temptation. I have seen those who died living in sin.

But let me tell you something about the believer who stands. This believer is blessed in some ways that those who do not experience such storms may never learn. Such a believer longs for those times when the battle lets up even for a moment. But to the true believer who is in the battle in such ways as I have described, when the storm rages, suddenly the Word of God comes alive. Suddenly they see things they have never seen before. Truth becomes ever so sweet. The Lord becomes their only hope. To bow in prayer becomes a sweet relief. Oh, how this

believer longs to get out of the pain that has come in the battle, but never has he or she enjoyed the Bible to such an extent and never has he or she found such sweet relief in prayer. These are the blessings in the midst of the evil day to the believer who has done all to stand, and stands.

Others may read of those who have gone through such times when the Word of God became more important than their necessary food, and prayer became a sweet balm to the soul. And they may wish, "Oh, that I could experience that." But when the pressure comes, they bow and compromise. And never will that believer experience what they so admire in others.

But it is amazing, when the battle is over for a while, it may happen that soon the Bible is not quite as enjoyable anymore, prayer becomes difficult. Slowly, other things begin to creep in and drain off the Christian soldier's energies.

Maybe someone like that is listening or will listen to this message. Here is a word to them: When we are not in the evil day, now is the time to get all the armor in order again. Now is the time to read the Word of God and to pray and to prepare. This evil day may well come again.

A believer can drain off a lot of valuable time in pleasure or sports or hobbies or a host of other things, and be ill equipped in the evil day.

Jesus gave a parable of four soils. Here is a picture of four kinds of people in whom the Word of God is sown. And in Matthew 13:22 Jesus said:

22 *"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the*

cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches (and Mark adds, the desires of other things) choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Everybody has the cares of this world. They are new to no one. A place to live, food, vehicle and all that goes with living. There is nothing wrong with these cares, but we can let them drain off all our time so that is all we do. And these cares, that are so natural, are used by the devil to draw us into using up all our time so that we have no time for the Word of God and prayer and things that matter most.

How about the deceitfulness of riches. If only I had this one more thing. Or, once I have that thing, all will be well. And it is always just a little more. And all of a sudden we look back and time is gone. Life is closing for us. The Word was choked. The Gospel of Mark adds that the desires of other things enter. I mentioned such things as sports and hobbies and recreation, and camping. All these can be legitimate things, but they can rob us. I ask you, how easy is it to get sidetracked?

It has been very painful for me to watch what my family has been caused to endure because of the stands I have taken in ministry. And not only my family; I have watched many of you and I have found it hard to endure. I see what is happening. And then I wonder, where would we be if it had not been for the pain? I see and hear professing believers around us and I see such very shallow spirituality, and I say, "Oh Lord God! It is better to endure pain than to be there. Do what You see is best."

Now note that the word *stand* in the phrase, "Stand therefore," is an imperative. If all we had to do was put on the armor, and then

we were safe, we would not now need to be instructed to stand, now that we have the armor on. But here comes the battle, and now we must put to use all we have disciplined ourselves for.

Whenever you have a command, it takes for granted that we have a free will. There is simply no use to command someone to do something when he has no free will to obey or disobey. That holds true for the believer and the non-believer alike. The non-believer is commanded to do certain things, like to repent and believe. It is his will that is important in this decision. He can decide to do what he is commanded, and he can decide not to do so.

When we are commanded to stand, it takes for granted that we can make a choice in the matter. I had a younger brother that I led to the Lord. An evil day came in his life and he gave in. When I saw him go off the path, I warned him numerous times but he slipped further and further. Today he is still living in willful sin. He refuses to change. With each year of willful sinning, his chances for eternal life get less and less. To turn now would take a repentance that few have the courage to do.

If we learn to take stands, we will also soon learn that every pressure is exerted against that stand. I have mentioned family pressure and peer pressure, and I am not just talking about teenagers when I mention peer pressure. And the danger of each pressure point is that we may give in to that pressure and fail to stand when we come into some evil day.

We must make no mistake about it, to stand, as we are commanded here, is no simple or easy thing. It can be like wrestling when all energy is gone and you feel at any

moment you won't be able to stay on your feet any more. You begin to wish you had never entered this match. It is like a battle in warfare when all begins to seem hopeless and you just want to turn and run. The potential to slip and fall is huge, in the evil day. And then comes this command, "Stand therefore! You have done all to stand, now stand!"

2) The context in which you stand (14b-20)

We are looking at how to defeat the devil. And we are beginning to look at the particulars. Here is the command: Stand! And the rest of what we will be looking at is the particulars of what one must do to prepare to stand. We have this in verses 14b-20. The first thing we have is we are to stand, "having girded your waist with truth."

Notice that it is when one has girded himself and put all the other pieces in place that one is commanded to stand. Without having done this, we cannot stand. It is then most crucial that the new believer puts on the whole armor.

a) The belt

We ask now, why would Paul begin with the belt? He says, "having girded your waist with truth." And then, would he liken the belt to truth? Why would he place truth first? Well, let us begin by looking at the Roman soldier's equipment. Look at him. If you were to liken one of these pieces of the Roman soldier's equipment to truth, which one would you use?

Well, we begin then with the belt. The soldier wore one piece of underclothing and a tunica over top. The tunica was, I understand, wider than long and had holes

cut for the head to fit through and for the arms to fit through. The belt went over the tunica, and the tunica could be pulled up so that there was plenty of loose clothing above the belt, but the belt held it in place.

Now for any kind of action, putting on the belt was most important. The preparing act for any work required putting on the belt. As simple as the belt was, it was of primary importance. Let me say this, that truth is of primary importance for the Christian.

I also understand that the Roman soldier's belt meant a great deal to him personally. Unlike the rest of the equipment, it was a personalized item. He spent his own money and time into making it look the way he wanted it. He wore it even when he was not dressed as a soldier. When he was in uniform, equipment was mounted on the belt and it was so used as to transfer some of the weight from the shoulders to the hips. Often a cloth waistband was worn under the belt to keep the belt from chafing the body. This cloth waistband could be placed in such a way as to form a pocket to put personal items into such as money. Fixed to the belt was a pugio, a small wide dagger from 7-11 inches long. It was carried on the left side.

I tried to find out in what order the Roman soldier put his armor on. I could not find that. Of the pieces listed here, the belt would have been first. We have this order here in our passage: the belt; the breastplate; the shoes; the shield; the helmet; and the sword.

But by putting the belt first, I think the importance of truth is stressed.

Truth is a most important matter in all of life, to the believer and the unbeliever alike. I might say truth is a most amazing thing. One can hardly think of truth without thinking of Pilate, at the time of Jesus' judgment.

Turn to John 18. It will be familiar to most of you but it is worth considering in light of our subject. They had captured Jesus in Gethsemene and brought him to the religious leaders and from there He was brought before Pilate, the Roman, secular authority. The Jews could not kill Jesus without the authority of Rome.

We begin in verse 28:

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

29 Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

30 They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

31 Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,"

32 that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

Well, Pilate has a decision to make, and so he now goes back inside to where Jesus

is waiting.

We go on in verse 33:

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."

Pilate's question, "What is truth" is the age old question. We are on a subject that could hardly find a rival for size. I checked on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. You see, when man does not have the answers to such concepts as goodness, evil, or truth; he resorts to philosophizing. Maxwell was surely right when he called it *foolosophy*. You see, what philosophy does is come up with

theories. It is guesswork.

Well, this encyclopedia starts the subject of truth like this:

Truth is one of the central subjects in philosophy. It is also one of the largest. Truth has been a topic of discussion in its own right for thousands of years. Moreover, a huge variety of issues in philosophy relate to truth, either by relying on theses about truth, or implying theses about truth.

It would be impossible to survey all there is to say about truth in any coherent way. Instead, this essay will concentrate on the main themes in the study of truth in the contemporary philosophical literature. It will attempt to survey the key problems and theories of current interest, and show how they relate to one-another. End quote.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth/>

In dealing with truth this philosophical encyclopedia then gives the theories of truth. One of the theories that has been put into words is what is called the correspondence theory. It says that truth is that which corresponds to reality. But the philosopher then asks, "What is reality?" I was asked that this summer by a man who hated the Bible.

Well, here is how I define truth: *Truth is any communication, generally by propositions in speech, that corresponds to reality.* The fact that something is is not truth. For example, as I have mentioned other times; this pulpit is not truth. But if I say: This is a pulpit; that is a communication by a proposition in words that is true. If I say: This pulpit is blue. That is a proposition that is not true. Truth generally has to do with the propositions made about something.

Now why is all this important? Because the very first thing the Christian soldier is to do is gird himself with truth. So we must know what truth is. Truth is any proposition that corresponds to reality. I view that, not as a theory of what truth is, but the correct definition of truth. So before the soldier can gird himself with truth, he must know what it is and have it.

Before one can have truth, that truth must be revealed to one in some way. I would divide truth into two great realms. There is what we call general revelation. General revelation is all that is revealed to man through the five senses about the material universe. This is the realm in which schools and colleges and universities work.

Then there is special revelation. Special revelation is that which is revealed to us that cannot be learned through the five senses. For example, we cannot learn how the universe came into existence through the five senses. That is what evolution tries to do and it will NEVER, EVER succeed. No religion in the world, no theory, and no belief knows how everything began. To know this, if it is knowable, must come through a special revelation by someone who was there and saw it happen. We know who that was and we know the One who made it happen.

I believe when it says the Christian soldier is to be girded with truth, the main intent is spiritual truth. This is truth that comes through special revelation. If one is honest with biblical truth, it will make one honest in all truth.

Turn to Romans 1. I see one connection

between the realm of general revelation and special revelation. I see this as the bridge to special revelation. We begin in verse 16:

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

The one thing that is revealed in general revelation is that there is a God. Albert Barnes quotes Cicero to prove that man knows there is a God. Cicero was born 100 years before Christ. I read that he was a Roman statesman, a lawyer, a scholar, and a philosopher. Here is what he said:

"There is something in the nature of things which the mind of man, which

reason, which human power cannot effect; and certainly that which produces this must be better than man. What can this be called but God?"

And in another place he says:

"What can be so plain and manifest, when we look at heaven, and contemplate heavenly things, as that there is some Divinity of most excellent mind, by which these things are governed?"

In another message I quoted Jordan Peterson. He talks about this voice that told him he was lying when he was lying. It told him, "That's not true. You don't really believe that." And so he discovered he was a liar. Then he asked many of his university students if they had had a similar experience and he said it is universally true. And we know that just that universally something in them says, "Yes, there is a God."

There is no real atheist. If anyone says he or she is, they are liars. There are no real agnostics either. The agnostic says you can't really know if there is a God or if there isn't. But he is a liar too. According to the Bible it is the fool who has said in his heart, "There is no God." That there must be a God is something that is revealed to all.

Listen to Psalm 19:1-3:

*1 The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.*

That is what Cicero was saying. Verse 2:

*2 Day unto day utters speech, And night
unto night reveals knowledge.*

All during the day-time, and throughout the night, God is being revealed. Observe a dandelion and you will see it. One look at the stars and you will see it. All of creation literally shouts, "There is a God!" Verse 3:

3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.

There is no one who learns to speak, there is no one who makes propositions, that has not heard from the universe that there is a God.

So I believe that every unbeliever, everybody who has never heard of God, somewhere comes to realize there must be a God. I spoke to a non-believer this summer who had about as little use for believers as I have ever talked to. He grew up in a home where the Bible at least was present and the parents would have said they believed it.

As we were talking I said, "Tell me, do you believe there is a God?" I got the sense that he hated my question. But since he had said I had a brain of manure, I suppose he didn't want me to be able to say that to him. So he grudgingly admitted there must be something like that. And I said, "And who is he?" And he said, "How do you know it's a he?"

Everybody that is honest knows there is a God. But like this man, nobody knows who that God is by general revelation. If you do not have special revelation, which he did not have because he didn't believe the Bible, you cannot know if God is 33 million beings or a woman. You simply can't know. You have nothing from which you can learn that. But you can know there is a God.

Now in our text it says that the believer is to be girded with truth. What realm of truth are we talking about? Well, it is that realm we call special revelation. It is that truth which only the Bible reveals. You can learn there is a God without the Bible, but you cannot know who that God is. And this truth the believer has, and this truth is to be the believer's belt.

Now think of this special revelation. There was no human being around when God created the heavens and the earth. As a matter of fact, we would know nothing of how everything came into existence if it was not for the special revelation of the Bible.

Modern man, growing up in the so-called age of science, which began in the 1700's says, "Well, can you test whether the Bible is true? Can it be shown scientifically? What evidence do you have as far as testing is concerned?" Well, the world has ways of testing things, whether it be in the realm of science or in the realm of history or in the area of crime. Is there any evidence, not whether there is a God, but whether the Bible is true? Can we know that the Bible is true? Can we know it gives us spiritual truth? Can we know we can trust it?

Truth is a very complicated thing. But man determines that to be true which provides evidence that is beyond a reasonable doubt. This is how decisions are made by law. One of the key things to determine truth is to gather evidence.

Turn to Deuteronomy 13. When you gather the evidence for whether there is a God or not, the evidence is so huge that only

a fool would deny it. When you gather the evidence whether the Bible is true, again, the evidence is beyond a reasonable doubt. In Deuteronomy 13 God instructed Israel on how to determine the truth of a matter.

We begin in verse 12:

12 *"If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying,*

13 *'Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods"' -which you have not known-*

14 *"then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you,*

15 *"you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword-utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock, with the edge of the sword.*

16 *"And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again.*

Here is the matter to be tested for truth. You have heard that someone of one of your cities has enticed the people in the city to serve other gods. When that is heard, it needs to be determined if it is true. So here is what you do. You gather the evidence. Here's how: First, you shall enquire. That is gathering evidence. Second, you shall search it

out. That is gathering corroborating evidence. Third: you shall ask diligently. Now you gather further corroborating evidence.

Turn to Mark 14. When the Jews had captured Jesus and they wanted Him to be crucified, they knew they would have to have strong evidence in order to persuade Pilate to have Him crucified. In Mark 14:55 Jesus is before the Jewish leaders and they are trying to get evidence together to have Him crucified. We begin in verse 55:

55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none.

They were searching for convincing evidence. Verse 56:

56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying,

58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'"

Here is the best they could do. But when those men were cross examined for corroborating evidence, look at what happened in verse 59:

59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

You see, they knew how to gather evidence and they knew Pilate would not go for such flimsy complaints.

Verse 60:

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?"

61 But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?"

64 "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

This is all they had for evidence, and quite obviously this would be the best they could do. And when Pilate spoke with Jesus he knew Jesus was innocent. Here is how you establish truth.

So, take now the very first sentence in the Bible. Listen to the incredible claim it makes, or the proposition it gives: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth!" And from there on we are given a history of mankind. Here is a book so far beyond anything that has ever been written, it has nothing to truly compare it to.

So we might make this proposition. The Bible is the Word of God. This is the truth of the belt in our passage. We have said that there is a God, and that the

Bible is His Word. Here is the claim of Scripture regarding the Bible from 2 Timothy 3:16:

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

When Paul says to put on the belt of truth, it is the truth of the Bible he is talking about. If we live by this truth we will live by all truth. So when we say that the Bible is the truth, that it contains all that is needed for life and godliness, the question is: Do we have evidence for that? Well, here is what we read in Deuteronomy earlier: 1 enquire; 2 search it out; 3 and ask diligently.

I had intended to give the undeniable evidence that we have, that the Bible is the Word of God. Because of time I won't but let me recommend here our message on sermonaudio.com/mecl called, "Is The Bible The Word of God?" We give 10 pieces of evidence that I believe show beyond reasonable doubt that the Bible is in fact the Word of God. This is the truth the belt in our passage speaks of.

CONCL: So our verse tells us that once we have put on the whole armor of God, now we must stand. This is the battle. The devil will seek to knock us over. He is not altogether unsuccessful in this. If we live any length of time as a Christian, we will have met or learned of those who made a great start, and they fell. Some repent after backsliding, some never change.

How many people have not rejoiced in the truth until it affected some friend or family member, and then truth was redefined? Someone said that Nietzsche had said you can tell much about a man's character by how much truth he can tolerate. I would say you can tell much about a man's character by how much truth he is willing to do. One might tolerate quite a lot of truth, but not do it.

Truth is the benchmark for all of life. It is of primary importance. Jesus said of the unbeliever, "He that does the truth comes to the light." Here is my question for each of us: Am I totally committed to the truth of the Word of God? Am I willing to follow it, regardless of what it requires of me? Am I totally sold out to it? Am I totally committed?