

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to the last section in the book of Ephesians—chapter 6, verses 10-24.
2. I would like to invite you to take God’s Word and turn to Ephesians 6 as we begin a study of these final verses this morning.
3. Read Ephesians 6:10-24
4. We are in a battle—a spiritual battle.
5. It is not with people as this text demonstrates but with Satan and his demons.
6. The one who tempts us in our moments of weakness (Lk.4:2) is the same one who attacks the relationship we have just mentioned in 5:18-6:9.
7. If context means anything in this letter, it is certainly here.
8. Paul has told the Ephesians to be “filled with the Spirit” in 5:18.
9. In 5:19-6:9 he has shown us what happens when you obey the command in 5:18.
10. Wives will submit to their husbands, husbands will submit to their wives, parents will submit to their children, children will submit to their parents, employees will submit to their employers, and employers will submit to their employees.

11. As Paul closes this letter, he wants the Ephesians to understand one final truth—Satan does not want you to live this manner of life.
12. He wants there to be conflict in relationships.
13. He wants marriages to end in divorce.
14. He wants children to rebel against their parents.
15. He wants employees to rebel against their employers and employers to harsh to their employees.
16. So Paul says you have to ***be prepared for the battle*** by ***using the armor God has given you.***
17. None of the armor mentioned is for the back.
18. God does not want you to retreat in the battle.
19. He wants you to depend on Him and use the weapons He has provided in fighting the battle.
20. So to *be prepared for the battle*, you have to *depend on the Lord.*
21. Paul begins verse 10 with two words, “Be strong.”
22. Those two words give us *the charge* we need for depending on the Lord.
23. Each time we depend on Him we are prepared for the battle.

I. Be Prepared for the Battle (vv.10-12)

A. By Depending on the Lord (v.10)

1. The charge

The words “Be strong” (enduanamoo, pres.pass.imp.) means, “to endure with strength.” It carries the idea of “clothing one’s self with strength as one puts on a garment.” Lit. “Be constantly strengthened” (Vincent).

a) This was Paul’s charge to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:1 (NASB77)** ¹ You therefore, my son, ***be strong*** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

b) This was also Paul’s charge to the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 16:13 (NASB77)** ¹³ Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, ***be strong***.

Paul wants his readers to be clothed with God’s strength by depending on the Lord because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but “divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses” (2 Cor.10:4).

Paul notes *the source* of our strength in the next three words of verse 10.

2. The source

“in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.”

The *source* of our strength is not in ourselves but “in the Lord.” We are to “be strong” in Him and “His might.”

- a) **Psalms 18:32 (NKJV)** ³² ***It is God*** who arms me with ***strength***, and makes my way perfect.
- b) **Habakkuk 3:19 (NASB77)** ¹⁹ ***The Lord GOD*** is my ***strength***.
- c) **Philippians 4:13 (NASB77)** ¹³ I can do all things ***through Him*** (Christ) who ***strengthens*** me.

God’s best soldiers are those who are conscious of their own weakness and ineffectiveness, and who rely solely on Him.¹

When Paul experienced “a messenger of Satan” that was sent “to torment” him in 2 Corinthians 12:7, he prayed “three times that it might leave” (v.8) but God said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (v.9).

God gave Paul the “thorn in the flesh” and chose to leave it to aid in his humility and Paul gladly rejoiced in it because of the power God revealed in him. So Paul said in verse 9, “Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of

¹William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Eph 6:10.

Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (v.10).

God's strength and grace is made available in our weaknesses, even in those that are God-given like the thorn Paul had.

God's grace and strength is what Paul needed not some therapy, not some Christian counselor, just God's provision for the battle that he mentions in verse 11.

Paul tells the Ephesians to be prepared for the battle by depending on the Lord and...

B. By Clothing Yourself with His Provision (v.11)

1. The instruction

"Put on the full armor of God"

- a) "Put on" (enduo, aor.mid.imp.), "to cloth with" (Wuest). "It carries the idea of once and for all, of permanence" (MacArthur). Lit. "Be clothed" (Strong).

It's used in **Ephesians 4:24 (NASB77)**²⁴ and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

It's also used in **Colossians 3:12 (NASB77)**¹² And so, as those who have been chosen of God,

holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

The full armor of God is not something to be **put on** and taken off occasionally but is something to be put on permanently. It is not a uniform to wear only while playing a game and then to remove when the game is over. **The armor of God** is to be the Christian's lifelong companion.²

- b) "the full armor of God" can be understood in two ways:

First it is "of God" (ton theon – genitive of origin – indicates God's provides the armor)

Second it is the "full or whole armor of God" (panoplia), It is literally "all the weapons." It is the "full armor or complete armor—the shield, sword, lance, helmet, greaves, and breastplate."

In classical Greek, the word was used of the *full armor of a heavy-armed soldier*.³

²John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 338.

³Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:11.

Paul was probably chained to a Roman soldier as he wrote Ephesians, and he saw in the Roman soldier's uniform the perfect illustration of how the believer is to be prepared to fight the enemy.

William MacDonald says, "It is necessary to be completely armed; one or two pieces will not do. Nothing less than the whole panoply which God provides will keep us invulnerable. **The devil** has various stratagems—discouragement, frustration, confusion, moral failure, and doctrinal error. He knows our weakest point and aims for it. If he cannot disable us by one method, he will try for another."⁴

That's what he sought to do when he tempted Jesus in Matthew 4.

Jesus "had fasted forty days and forty nights," and then "became hungry" (v.2).

What does the devil do? He comes tempting Jesus by telling Him to turn "these stones" into "bread" (v.3).

In other words, don't depend on the Father to meet your need, meet it yourself since you are the Son of God. But Jesus answered Satan by

⁴William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Eph 6:11.

quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

He knew Jesus was “weak” physically so he aimed his weapons at the place where He was most vulnerable but Jesus didn’t yield to him. He continued to yield Himself to God and His Word.

Paul gives *the purpose* for the armor in verse 11:

2. The purpose

“that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

- a) The word “stand” (histemi) “when used in a military sense had the idea of holding a central position while under attack.” It literally means “to stand still.”

When you have the full armor of God on then you can “stand still” or hold your position when you’re being attacked. You have protection and weapons for fighting back.

What are the kinds of weapons you will experience? “Schemes.”

- b) The word “Schemes” (methodia) carries the idea of “craftiness, deception, and trickery.”

The term was often used of a wild animal who cunningly stalked and then unexpectedly pounced on its prey. Satan's evil **schemes** are built around stealth and deception.⁵

John Calvin says, "We ought to be prepared on all sides, so as to want nothing. The Lord offers to us arms for repelling every kind of attack. It remains for us to apply them to use, and not leave them hanging on the wall. To quicken our vigilance, he reminds us that we must not only engage in open warfare, but that we have a crafty and insidious foe to encounter, who frequently lies in ambush."⁶

- 1) Peter speaks of this in **1 Peter 5:8 (NASB77)** ⁸ Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Satan is only interested in one thing—your destruction. He wants to “devour” you like a lion does its prey.

- 2) That's why Paul warned the elders at Ephesus concerning false teachers

⁵John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 338.

⁶John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Ephesians*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Eph 6:11.

He said in **Acts 20:29-30 (NASB77)** ²⁹ "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

The sooner we realize Satan is a liar the sooner we will recognize the battle we're in. When Jesus was speaking to the Jews in John 8, they accused Him of being born of fornication in verse 41 and they having one Father, God. He responds to them by saying in **John 8:42-47 (NASB77)** ⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. ⁴³ "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴ "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this

reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

So being prepared for the battle involves depending on the Lord, clothing yourself with His provision and...

C. By Recognizing Where the Battle Is (v.12)

It's important at this time for Paul to make this point because he has just mentioned the relationships of wives and husbands, children and parents, and employees and employers.

When we're struggling in these relationships, we need to realize two things:

1. It is not with men

"for our struggle is not against flesh and blood."

William MacDonald says, "This warfare is not a matter of contending against godless philosophers, crafty priests, Christ-denying cultists, or infidel rulers. The battle is against demonic forces, against battalions of fallen angels, against evil spirits who wield tremendous power. Though we cannot see them, we are constantly surrounded by wicked spirit-beings. While it is true that they

cannot indwell a true believer, they can oppress and harass him.”⁷

In the word “wrestle,” (*palē* (παλη)), Paul uses a Greek athletic term. Thayer defines as follows: “a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to press and hold down his prostrate antagonist, namely, hold him down with his hand upon his neck.” When we consider that the loser in a Greek wrestling contest had his eyes gouged out with resulting blindness for the rest of his days, we can form some conception of the Ephesian Greek’s reaction to Paul’s illustration. The Christian’s wrestling against the powers of darkness is no less desperate and fateful. The literal Greek is, “Our wrestling is not against blood and flesh.” The Greek reverses the order.⁸

“Struggle” (*pale*) then refers, to a “hand-to-hand fight” (Rienecker). The root idea here is, swaying back and forth while locked in mortal battle. An exchange of arrows or artillery is not pictured

⁷William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Eph 6:12.

⁸Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:12.

here, but sweat against sweat, breath against breath.⁹

Our greatest enemy is not the world we see, corrupt and wicked as it is, but the world we cannot see.

It is true we may experience persecution from men but the real enemy is not “flesh and blood.”

- a) Acts 16:16-34 (demon-possessed girl / prison)
- b) Acts 17:1-15 (men at Thessalonica / Berea)
- c) **1 Thessalonians 2:13-18 (NASB77)** ¹³ And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings *at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,* ¹⁵ who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, ¹⁶ hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles

⁹R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 214.

that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost. ¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been bereft of you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet **Satan thwarted us.**

2. It is with demons

Demons are angels who fell with Satan in his rebellion against God.

Revelation 12:4 describes Satan as a “dragon” whose “tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.”

Jude 1:6 (NASB77) describes them as “angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode.”

Colossians 1:16 (NASB77) says they were created by Jesus: ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him.

Kent Hughes says, “We are all involved in a superhuman battle in which conventional tactics will avail nothing. Awareness that we are involved in a cosmic battle which is *supernatural, personal,*

and *futile if fought with natural weapons* is the beginning of conquering wisdom. We must be convinced of these things if we are to succeed. We must go beyond evangelical lip service to a deep-souled conviction which bursts our simplistic religious shackles.”¹⁰

- a) The devil is mentioned in verse 11
- b) “rulers, powers, world forces of this darkness, spiritual forces of wickedness – describe the different strata and rankings of those demons and the evil, supernatural empire in which they operate.
- c) The demonic categories are not explained

It is possible that:

- 1) “rulers or principalities” refer to a high order of demons
- 2) “powers” are another ranking

¹⁰R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 214.

The principalities and powers, are the *archē* (ἀρχή), “first ones, preeminent ones, leaders.”¹¹

- 3) “world forces of this darkness” refers to demons who have infiltrated various political systems of the world, attempting to pattern them after Satan’s realm of darkness

F. F. Bruce thinks [this] may refer to high-ranking fallen angels such as the angel-princes of Persia and Greece who hindered the archangelic messenger in his divine errand (as recorded in the Book of Daniel).¹²

- 4) “spiritual forces of wickedness” are demons involved in the most wretched and vile immoralities—such as extremely perverse sexual practices, the occult, Satan worship, and the like.

Marvin Vincent says, “The phrase is collective, of the evil powers viewed as a

¹¹Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:12.

¹²R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 215.

body. *Wickedness* is *active evil, mischief*. Hence Satan is called ὁ πονηρός *the wicked one*.¹³

J. Vernon McGee says, “Satan has a well-organized group, and his organization is manipulating in this world right now. The heartbreak, the heartache, the suffering, the tragedies of life are the work of Satan in the background. He is the cause of the great problems that are in the world today.

We have the enemy located and identified. That enemy is spiritual. It is Satan who heads up his demonic forces. Now we need to recognize where the battle is. I think the church has largely lost sight of the spiritual battle. We feel that if we have a lovely church building and are attracting crowds and if the finances are coming in, everything is going nicely. The financial condition of a church, however, is not where the battle is. I will grant that, if a church which has been supporting itself begins to get into debt, it is an indication that something is wrong: actually, it means the battle is being lost in the spiritual realm. There should be questions such as: Are the members of the church being built up in Christ? Is the Word of God being taught? Is there a spirit of love and cooperation among the members? Is gossip reduced to a minimum? There must not be an exercise in legalism but an exercise in right relationships among those who are the

¹³Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 3:406.

brethren in Christ. Where there is a spirit of criticism and of bitterness and of hatred, the Spirit of God cannot work.

Churches like to talk about the numbers who come to Christ. They like to talk about how many decisions they have had. Yet when the facts are really boiled down and examined and you look for the so-called converts two years later, you often find that they have disappeared. We don't seem to realize that there is a spiritual warfare being carried on today and that people need to be grounded in the Word of God. It is a manifestation of demonic power that people are being blinded and carried away into all kinds of cults and religions and "isms" with false beliefs. As a result of all this, the Word of God sinks into insignificance in such churches and organizations. This is the work of the enemy, Satan and his demonic hosts.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

1. Do you recognize the battle?
2. If you're going to fight this battle, you have to depend on the Lord, cloth yourself with His provision, and recognize where the battle is.
3. It's not with men but with demons and Satan himself.

¹⁴J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981). 5:279-280.

4. In our next time together, we will look at the armor God gives every believer for this battle.
5. Let's pray.
6. If you're here today and have never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, then might not be aware of such a battle as we have talked about this morning.
7. Satan battles for your soul and wants to do all he can to keep you away from Christ.
8. **Luke 8:12 (NASB77)** describes those who hear the gospel and do not believe as those "who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved."
9. **2 Corinthians 4:4 (NASB77)** describes him as "the god of this world [who] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
10. If God has opened your eyes to Him this morning, turn to Him now in repentance and embrace His grace as we pray.