



## Be Strong In The Lord

Here at the mid-point of chapter 6 in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul begins transitioning toward the closing of his epistle. After many pages of doctrine, warning, exhortation, and instruction, he now moves to encouragement and reassurance.

***Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*** Eph 6:10-12

As we touched on earlier in this series through Ephesians, the believers in Ephesus were surrounded by rampant and perverse idol worship. It enveloped the entire culture of Ephesus at the penning of this letter and for many years that followed. The pull of such an idolatrous society on any Christian in that area would have been incredibly powerful, and the temptation to go-along to get-along must have been intense.

Aware of this, Paul told believers to ***“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”*** As every Christian knows, our power is only derived from the Lord's power. We have almost no ability to resist sin and temptation without help from the Holy Spirit. We must be strong in the Lord and trust in His infinite strength and might!

One reason I love the Apostle Paul is that he doesn't just say something and walk away. He follows up this appeal to be strong with a very practical “how”: ***“Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”***

We'll dive deeper into the 'pieces' of the armor of God in the coming weeks, but here Paul lays the foundation for what he's about to teach believers with a rather simple overview of the lesson. Put on the armor of God so we can stand firm because ***“our struggle is not against flesh and blood.”***

This is a very important fact for each of us to remember. When bad things happen, it is easy to blame people or even the Lord. And while there are bad people, and yes, God is totally sovereign and nothing is outside His control, our struggle and battle is not against these people and certainly not against the Lord. It's not even against governors or presidents or world leaders. It is ***“against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”***

Spiritual warfare is real. We see evidence of this throughout Scripture from Genesis 3 all the way through Revelation. At some point in history, Satan fell from grace and rallied some of the angels in heaven to follow him. While the Bible does not give us many details on this event, it



tells us that Satan is a deceiver and an enemy of our souls, and will eventually be defeated and cast into an eternal lake of fire. For more on this, see Isaiah 14:12-15, 1 Chron 21:1, John 8:44, Luke 10:18, 2 Peter 2:4, Rev 12, and Rev 20:10.

We must remember that our battle is only won by standing strong in the Lord, and we can do that through prayer, study of Scripture, and remaining vigilant. It takes a lot of practice, but looking at the world through a spiritual lens helps prevent being sucked into the chaos and disorder that many lost souls suffer through today. We benefit greatly from seeing that there is a very real yet unseen enemy prowling around like a lion, looking for whom he may devour (see 1 Peter 5:8). Being on guard and committing everyday events to prayer helps keep our mind's eye focused on what truly matters: bringing glory to God and the gospel to the lost.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece