

## Wheelersburg Baptist Church 2/2/03 Brad Brandt

### Ephesians 6:10-13 "How to Survive in Spiritual Warfare" \*\*

Main Idea: According to Ephesians 6:10-13, we must fulfill three responsibilities if we're going to survive the attacks of the evil one.

I. We must depend (10).

A. Here is why we often don't.

1. We forget we're in a battle.
2. We fail to tap into our spiritual resources.
3. We underestimate our enemy.

B. Here is what we must do.

1. We must rely on the Lord.
2. We must rely on His power.

II. We must discern (11-12).

A. We need to recognize the armor of God.

1. If you know Christ, you have all you need to stand.
2. If you don't use what you have, you are in danger.

B. We need to recognize the attack of the devil.

1. We cannot see our enemy.
2. We are in a spiritual battle.

III. We must defend (13).

A. Our mission isn't offensive.

B. Our mission is defensive.

1. The attack is coming.
2. The time to prepare is now.

Inventory Time: If you want to stand in the battle...

1. You must admit how weak you are.
2. You must admit how strong Christ is.
3. You must admit how much you need Him every day.

The Church of Jesus Christ is under attack. You and I are under attack. We have an enemy, a fierce, cunning, powerful enemy.

This is nothing new. The battle has raged since the church was birthed into existence two thousand years ago.

The question arises, "How can we survive?" Herein lies the problem. Many are not. Many who name the name of Christ are falling prey to the enemy. Men and women who were once on the front lines of service for the Savior are back in the barracks, so to speak, frustrated and ineffective. It can happen to anyone.

What's tragic is that it need not happen. The Bible says that followers of Christ can be overcomers. We don't need to fail and fall. We can stand.

The question is, *how?* How can we survive? Ephesians 6 tells us. Ephesians 6 is like a warfare manual, and it's to that text that we turn our attention.

This is week #5 in our series "Living with a Warfare Mentality." In this topical study of God's Word, we've been looking at key texts that address the subject of spiritual warfare. We've looked at 1 Peter 5:8-9, Genesis 3:1-8, John 16:1-4, and 2 Timothy 2:3-7. Today we come to what probably is the Cadillac text on the subject. In a sense, the other passages were a warm-up to this one. If you don't know what Ephesians

6:10-18 says, you are in great danger in the battle for it's here that we find out how to survive in clear, straightforward language.

We're going to camp on this text for the next three weeks or so, taking our time to examine it carefully, word by word. I plead with you at the outset. We must not merely *study* this text. We must study it with a firm commitment to *apply* it. Your very survival depends on what you are about to hear.

We begin this morning with verses 10-13. According to Ephesians 6:10-13, we must fulfill three responsibilities if we're going to survive the attacks of the evil one. Here's where we must start.

### I. We must depend (10).

Verse 10 begins, "Finally." Obviously, Paul is beginning a new and final subject in this letter. The readers of this letter were special people to him. Years before the apostle evangelized and started a church in the city of Ephesus. Now, ten years later from a Roman prison, he wrote the letter of Ephesians.

In Ephesians he taught about two great truths. First, as Christians we have resources (chapters 1-3). Secondly, as Christians we have responsibilities (chapters 4-6). The two go hand in hand. To whom much is given, much is required. Those who are in Christ have great spiritual resources available to them. God expects us to use those resources.

According to Ephesians 4:1, we are to live a life worthy of our calling. We are to walk a certain way through life. We are to walk in unity in the church (4:1-16). We are to walk in purity in the world (4:17-5:17). We are to walk under control of the Spirit (5:18-6:9), as reflected by our attitudes (5:18-20), by our family relationships (5:22-6:4), and by our relationships on the job (6:5-9). Then we come to this word...

"Finally." We've come to the final section of Paul's letter. And it's certainly by no means the least important. In fact, in some respects it sums up everything for us. Paul gives us our marching orders last, so we won't lose them or forget them!

What's the last thing Paul wants the Ephesian Christians to know? Verse 10—"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Wiersbe reminds us that we don't live for Christ on the playground, but one the battleground.

Please don't miss this. We are in a battle, a raging battle.

Listen. There are a lot of frustrated, struggling Christians these days. They're not doing very well in the battle. Why not?

A. Here is why we often don't. I'll mention three common reasons...

1. *We forget we're in a battle.* We don't see any bullets flying or hear any tanks crashing through the walls around us, the reason being this isn't a physical warfare. So we forget. And if we forget, we won't *depend*.

Know this. You won't depend unless you acknowledge that you are in a *battle*. You won't make Bible reading a daily priority. You won't make the church's prayer meeting a non-negotiable on your schedule. You won't hit your knees before you go out the door every day. You won't do any of this *if* you forget you are in a battle.

Here's another reason we struggle.

2. *We fail to tap into our spiritual resources.* We have all we need to live for God in this dangerous world. But know this. It's not in ourselves. It's *in Christ*. In fact, that's a great theme in Ephesians. The phrase "in Christ" appears throughout. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has

blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing *in Christ*." Those who do well in the Christian life are those who tap into their spiritual resources.

3. *We underestimate our enemy.* One of Satan's strategies is to get people to believe he doesn't exist. But since we are Bible-believing people he knows he can't get us to deny his existence so he takes a different approach. He gets us to overestimate ourselves and underestimate him. If we do that we will struggle.

So there are some reasons why we don't do well in the battle. Now let's look at the positive.

B. Here is what we must do. Verse 10 again, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." There's what we must do. Depend.

Notice the verb is passive. BE strong. Literally, "Be strengthened by the Lord." It's also present tense, meaning this is a continuous process. That's vital. We'll never survive the battle depending on our own strength, not for one moment.

On what must we depend? It's a two part answer.

1. *We must rely on the Lord.* "Be strong *in the Lord*." That is, depend on a person. Christianity is highly personal. By faith, we must enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and then live in constant dependence on Him.

Vance Havner once said, "A wife who is 85% faithful to her husband is not faithful at all. There is no such thing as part-time loyalty to Jesus Christ."

Part-time dependence won't cut it. That's exactly what Jesus told His followers in John 15. In fact, what Ephesians 6 says by using a military image, John 15 communicates using an agricultural image. In John 15:4 Jesus said, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." And in verse 5 He concluded, "Apart from Me you can do nothing."

2. *We must rely on His power.* "Be strong...in his mighty power." The KJV says, "Be STRONG in the POWER of His MIGHT." Paul used three different Greek words that communicate strength. Each reinforces the fact that we have the resources we need to survive the battle.

Listen. God has provided us with all the power we need to win this battle. You ask, "Just how much power is available to us?" Take a look at Ephesians 1:20-21. There Paul shares what he was praying for the Ephesians, one request being that they would grasp the power they have in Christ. What's true of this power? "Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>?21?</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>?22?</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church."

We have at our disposal the same power God exercised when He raised Christ from the dead. What is our responsibility? We must *depend*, on the Lord and on His power.

This message is for Christians. If you are not a Christian you cannot depend on the Lord because you don't know Him. You are cut off from God and held captive by the enemy. You are a spiritual POW. This message can be for you, but you must be saved. You must call upon the Savior. He is the only One who can break your chains. On the cross He died to set sinners free, taking their penalty for them, three days later rising again.

To become a Christian you must stop depending on yourself and place your faith in Jesus Christ. You must

trust Him and entrust your life to Him. I call on you to do so right now and assure you that if you do, He will set you free.

If we're going to survive in the spiritual battle, we must depend. Here's our second responsibility.

## II. We must discern (11-12).

What do we need to discern? Paul mentions two things.

A. We need to recognize the armor of God. Verse 11, "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

The term "put on" means "to clothe oneself." It's a command and the tense indicates we are to put on the armor once and for all. In other words, the armor of God is not a game uniform that you put on and take off one game at a time. It's armor you put on and leave on the rest of your life.

Many feel when Paul wrote Ephesians 6, he was chained to a Roman soldier. As he looked at the apparel, he saw a perfect illustration of how Christians need to be prepared to fight the enemy.

Next week we'll take a close look at the armor itself in verses 14-17. For now let me spell out two conclusions.

1. *If you know Christ, you have all you need to stand.* You have sufficient protection. However...

2. *If you don't use what you have, you are in danger.* Grave danger. What kind of danger? Paul explains at the end of verse 11, "So that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." Here's the second thing we need to discern, first the armor of God..

B. We need to recognize the attack of the devil. The KJV says, "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Listen. We have a fierce enemy. We are not to fight him. That's not what the armor is for. Yes, we need to put on God's armor, the armor God provides. But why? What's the purpose of the armor? We need it to what? STAND!

This is key. The Bible never tells us to attack the devil. It tells us to resist him (James 4:7). And when we resist him, he will flee.

Quite honestly, I am concerned about people who dabble with demons, with those who are fascinated with the occult.

Our responsibility is to depend, then discern. Discern the armor of God, and discern the attack of the devil.

MacArthur says it well, "Living for Christ is not like waltzing through a meadow picking daisies; it's like walking through a mine field with snipers firing at you! And you can't see the snipers because they belong to a supernatural realm."

What specifically are we to stand against? The devil's *schemes*. The KJV uses the term "wiles." The Greek word is *methodeias*. It can be translated as "methods," "craft," and "deceit." It's the same word used in 4:14, there rendered "deceitful *scheming*." The wiles of the devil take many forms, but he is at his wiliest when he succeeds in persuading people that he does not exist.

Former British pastor Martin Lloyd-Jones expressed his conviction in the following terms, "I am certain that

one of the main causes of the ill state of the church today is the fact that the devil is being forgotten. All is attributed to us. We have all become so psychological in our attitude and thinking. We are ignorant of this great objective fact, the being, the existence of the devil, the adversary, the accuser, and his fiery darts."

Paul continues his description of our enemy in verse 12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Let that sink in. What kind of enemy do we have? Paul spells out two vital truths.

1. *We cannot see our enemy.* He is not "flesh and blood," that is, people. Commentator Charles Hodge makes the observation, "If our adversary was a man, who had only human strength, ingenuity, and cunning, we might defend ourselves by human means. But as we have to contend with Satan, we need the armor of God."

Keep that in mind. Who is our opponent? Flesh and blood? People? No. People, even the most wicked of them, are not the real enemy. They are victims of the enemy.

2. *We are in a spiritual battle.* A spiritual "struggle," to be specific. The KJV uses the term "wrestle," but we're not talking about an athletic game here. In Roman times when two wrestlers went into the ring, each tried to get his hands around his opponent's neck. Then he would try to press his shoulders and head to the ground. If his head was pressed to the ground, he was put to death. If only his shoulders, he lived to fight again.

Know this. Satan wrestles with us. It's a life and death struggle. He wants to get his hands on our neck and devour us (1 Pet 5:8). He has a calculated strategy. He also has a host of wicked imps that do his bidding. Demons.

Paul describes four categories of these wicked angelic beings in verse 12. Our struggle is against "the rulers [KJV 'principalities'], against the authorities [KJV 'powers'], against the powers of this dark world [KJV 'rulers of darkness'], and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms [KJV 'spiritual wickedness in high places'].

Don't be confused by the term "heavenly" here. These are not friendly creatures. Hodge explains, "He speaks of them as in heaven. It is better to take the word heaven in a wide sense. It is very often used antithetically to the word **earth**. 'Heaven and earth,?' include the whole universe. Those who do not belong to the earth belong to heaven. All intelligent beings are terrestrial or celestial. Of the latter class some are good and some are bad, as of the angels some are holy and some unholy. These principalities and potentates, these rulers and spirits of wickedness, are not earthly magnates, they belong to the order of celestial intelligences, and therefore are the more to be dreaded, and something more than human strength and earthly armor is required for the conflict to which the apostle refers."

Yes, we are in a spiritual battle with an enemy we cannot see. What must we do? We must *discern*.

Watchman Nee wrote a helpful book entitled *Sit, Walk, Stand*. The title is based on three great truths communicated in Ephesians. I want you to see them. Ephesians tells us we must take three steps if we want to enjoy an abundant Christian life:

Step #1 We must *sit* (Eph 1-3; see 2:6).

Step #2 We must *walk* (Eph 4:1-6:9; see 4:1).

Step #3 We must *stand* (Eph 6:10-24; see 6:11).

Nee says the order is critical. Sit, then walk, then stand. If you're not seated in Christ, you'll never be able to live the Christian life (walk). And if you're not walking in obedience to Christ, you'll never be able to stand against the evil one.

We need to probe that final step a little more. *Stand*. Four times Paul emphasizes *standing* in verses 10-14. That's our objective. The Greek verb "stand" with the following preposition "against" in essence means "hold your ground." Again Watchman Nee remarks, "There is a precious truth hidden in that command of God. It is not a command to invade a foreign territory. . . We are not to march, but to stand."

Do you know what that means? The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ has already defeated the evil one. When? At His first coming.

That's one of the reasons why He did so many miracles. The miracles show us the power of Christ over the evil effects of sin. Jesus invaded enemy territory and recaptured Satan's hostages.

For instance, in Luke 8 Jesus cast demons out of the man at Gerasa. The man had been living in tombs. Luke records, "When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!"<sup>29</sup> For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man (Luke 8:27-28)." When Jesus cast out demons, He delivered people from the devil's army and made them His own.

The ultimate show down took place at the cross. Colossians 2:15 says, "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." Hebrews 2:14 says the Son of God became a man so that "by His death He might destroy Him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil."

Yes, at His first coming Jesus defeated the evil one. Furthermore, He's already announced what He's going to do to the evil one at His second coming. Matthew 25:4 states, "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the *eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*.'" The prophecy of Revelation 20:10 makes it clear the devil's days are numbered, for he will be "cast into the lake of fire."

Know this, my friend. Jesus defeated the evil one at His first coming. And Jesus will ultimately defeat the evil one when He returns. What difference should that make for us as we live today in the interim?

Our task is to STAND. That's defensive, not offensive. In fact, as we'll see next week, nearly all the weapons of our warfare in Ephesians 6 are purely defensive.

What's the difference between defensive warfare and offensive warfare? In a defensive battle, we've already won the ground and our aim is to keep it. In an offensive battle, we're fighting for ground that is not ours.

Jesus fought the offensive battle. He warred against Satan himself. Through the cross, He carried that warfare to the threshold of hell itself, and rescued captives held in the deadly clutches of the devil.

Our battle today is defensive. We don't need to fight to obtain victory over Satan. That's already available to us, through Christ, and only through Christ. We do not fight *for* victory, but *from* victory. Romans 8:37 says, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Don't miss that. In Christ we are ALREADY conquerors.

Theologians tell a story to illustrate how Christ's triumph presently benefits our lives. Imagine a city under siege. The enemy that surrounds the city will not let anyone or anything leave. Supplies are running low, and the citizens are fearful. But in the dark of the night, a spy sneaks through the enemy lines. He has rushed to the city to tell the people that in another place the main enemy force has been defeated; the

leaders have already surrendered. The people do not need to be afraid. It is only a matter of time until the besieging troops receive the news and lay down their weapons. Similarly, we may seem now to be surrounded by the forces of evil -- disease, injustice, oppression, death. But the enemy has actually been defeated at Calvary. Things are not the way they seem to be. It is only a matter of time until it becomes clear to all that the battle is really over.

How can we survive? We must depend and then discern. One more responsibility...

### III. We must defend (13).

"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

For the second time, Paul urges us to dress in the armor of God. It's *spiritual armor*. Why? Because we have a spiritual enemy. In fact, the implication is clear. If you don't put on the armor of God, you won't stand. We have a powerful enemy.

I think of an incident described in Acts 19. There some unsaved Jews tried to cast out demons. Do you remember what happened to them? The text records, "One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"<sup>16</sup> Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding (Acts 19:15-16)."

Again we see the term "stand," twice in fact in verse 13. What is our battle assignment? It is to "stand." We can't overemphasize this...

A. Our mission isn't offensive. Rather...

B. Our mission is defensive. We must *stand*.

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* offers this perspective, "Christians are not to attack Satan, or advance against him; they are only to "stand" or hold the territory Christ and His body, the church, have conquered. Without God's armor believers will be defeated by the "schemes" of the devil which have been effective for thousands of years."

MacArthur illustrates it this way: Suppose you're a soldier in the army, on guard duty. Suppose you see the enemy approaching in a surprise attack. What do you do? Do you run out and start shooting at the enemy by yourself? If you're foolish. What are guards supposed to do? Tell the Commander the enemy is attacking.

When Satan attacks, don't fight him. He'd destroy you. What should we do? Report to the Commander. How? According to verse 18, by "praying."

So here's our third responsibility. We must defend, that is, *stand*. And to do that we must put on the armor.

By the way, Paul gives us fuller incentive for wearing the armor in verse 13. He tells us...

1. *The attack is coming*. He says that the "day of evil" is coming. When is that? It's right now. It's the interim period. He doesn't say it *might* come, but *when*.

Paul knew firsthand about wrestling with evil forces. During his ministry at Ephesus (as described in Acts 19:21-41), a riot took place. He came close to losing his life. And the infant church was under attack. Who was the opponent? On the surface, a silversmith named Demetrius, a man who made idols of the goddess Diana. But Paul knew very well who the real enemy was. Behind Demetrius stood Satan and his evil

associates.

Brothers and sisters, this isn't fairy tale material. This is reality. The attack is coming for us, too.

2. *The time to prepare is now.* Put on the full armor now, so that you can stand then.

The fact is, many people are falling prey to Satan's crafty devices today. Yes, many, many people are falling. Even Christians. Remember Paul is talking to Christians here. And what is his appeal to them? Stand! Above all else, stand! Don't give the devil a toehold in your life! Stand!

Perhaps you're thinking, "But I'm too weak! I want to stand, but I'm afraid I can't do it." Let's make it personal then...

Inventory Time: If you want to stand in the battle... you must admit three things.

1. *You must admit how weak you are.* It's true. *You* can't stand, not on your own. Will you admit that today?

2. *You must admit how strong Christ is.* Writing in *Moody Monthly*, Carl Armerding recounted his experience of watching a wildcat in a zoo. "As I stood there," he said, "an attendant entered the cage through a door on the opposite side. He had nothing in his hands but a broom. Carefully closing the door, he proceeded to sweep the floor of the cage." He observed that the worker had no weapon to ward off an attack by the beast. In fact, when he got to the corner of the cage where the wildcat was lying, he poked the animal with the broom. The wildcat hissed at him and then lay down in another corner of the enclosure. Armerding remarked to the attendant, "You certainly are a brave man." "No, I ain't brave," he replied as he continued to sweep. "Well, then, that cat must be tame." "No," came the reply, "he ain't tame." "If you aren't brave and the wildcat isn't tame, then I can't understand why he doesn't attack you." Armerding said the man chuckled, then replied with an air of confidence, "Mister, he's old -- and he ain't got no teeth."

Do we have an enemy? Yes, but compared to our Savior our enemy "ain't got no teeth!" If you want to stand you must admit how weak you are and how strong Christ is.

3. *You must admit how much you need Him every day.* Depend, discern, and defend. That's what it takes, every day. Romans 13:12 says, "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

Jude 24-25 "To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—<sup>?25?</sup> to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!"