

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 1/12/92
Ephesians 6:10-13 "How to Survive in Spiritual Warfare"

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

Illust:

Q: How can we survive?

Problem: Many are not. . Many who name the name of Christ are falling prey.

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Q: How can we survive? Eph 6 tells us. Eph 6 is our Warfare Manual.

Proposition: According to Ephesians 6:10-13, we are responsible to do 3 things if we're going to survive the attacks of the evil one.

I. Depend (10)

- A. On the Lord
- B. On His Power

II. Detect (11-12)

- A. The Armor of God
- B. The Attack of the devil

III. Defend (13)

Review: Ephesians

What have we already learned? The apostle Paul evangelized and started a church in the city of Ephesus. 10 years later from a Roman prison, he wrote the letter of Ephesians. Ephesians teaches us 2 great truths.

- 1. As Christians, we have Resources (1-3).
- 2. As Christians, we have Responsibilities (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. We are to "walk" in a certain way (4:1). We are to walk. . .

- Walk in Unity in the Church (4:1-16)
- Walk in Purity in the World (4:17-5:17)
- Walk under control of the Spirit (5:18-6:9)
 - *as reflected by our attitudes (5:18-20)
 - *as reflected by our family relationships (5:22-6:4)
 - *as reflected by our relationships on the Job (6:5-9)
- Walk on guard against the Evil One (6:10-20)

Q: How do we do it? How can we survive? Three actions.

I. Depend (10).

6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

"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?

Wiersbe--We don't live for Christ on the playground, but the battleground! Please don't miss this. We are in a battle. A raging battle. If you want to survive the battle, you first must acknowledge you're in a battle.

Three Subtle Problems Plaguing Us:

1. We forget we're in a battle (don't come to prayer meeting).
2. We fail to tap into our spiritual resources.
3. We underestimate our Enemy.

Satan's strategy--To get people to believe he doesn't exist!

Illust: U.S. News letter to editor about Creation article

Here's our first responsibility--Depend.

V 11 "Be strong in the Lord"

Notice the verb is passive. BE strong. Lit. "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!

On what must we depend? Two part answer. . .

1. Depend on the Lord.

Depend on a person. Christianity is highly personal. By faith, we must enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

note: What Eph 6 says by using a military image, John 15 communicates using an agricultural image. Jn 15:5 Jesus said, "Abide in me and I in you. . . I am the vine, you are the branches. . . Without Me you can do nothing."

2. Depend on His Power.

Look at various words Paul uses to describe the power available to us. "Be STRONG in the POWER of His MIGHT." Three different Greek words. 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!

How much power is available to us? see Eph 1:19

What is our responsibility?

Depend. On the Lord, and on His power.

II Tim 2:1 "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"

Illust:

Tran: If we're going to survive in the spiritual battle, we must depend. Why? The answer is related to our 2nd responsibility. . .

II. Detect (11-12)

What do we need to detect? Two things.

A. Detect the Armor of God

6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

"put on" = to clothe oneself (a command) = to put on once for all!

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 Eph 6, he was chained to a Roman soldier. As he looked at his apparel, he was 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 vv 14-17.

Why do we need God's armor?

V 11 "that ye may be able to stand. . ."

B. Detect the Attack of the devil

6:11b "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"

Illust: MacArthur, 4, confrontation with demon possessed girl

We need to put on God's armor (the armor God provides). What's the purpose of the armor? We need it to what? STAND!

Listen. We have a fierce enemy.

II Cor 2:11 "Let Satan should get an advantage of us. . . his devices"

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

Concern: I worry about people who dabble with demons. People who are fascinated with the occult.

Our responsibility is to depend, then detect. Detect the armor of God. And detect the attack of the devil.

MacArthur, "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."

"wiles" = greek word "methodeias"; methods; craft; deceit; schemes; same word used in 4:14 "cunning craftiness"; the wiles of the devil take many forms, but he is at his wildest when he succeeds in persuading people that he does not exist.

Quote: M. 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." (Stott, 265)

What kind of enemy do we have? How can we detect his attack? Paul tells us.

6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

"wrestle"--the word does not refer to an athletic game; In Roman times when 2 wrestlers went into the ring, each tried to get his hands around his opponents 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.

Who is our opponent? "Flesh and blood"? People? No.

Listen. Satan wrestles with us. It's a life and death struggle. He wants to get his hands on our neck and devour us (I Pt 5:8). He has a calculated strategy. He has a host of wicked imps that do his bidding--demons. Paul describes the categories of these wicked angelic beings in v 12.

1. Principalities
2. Powers
3. Rulers of darkness
4. Spiritual wickedness

Illust: I recommend reading Frank Peretti's books, "This Present Darkness," and "Piercing the Darkness."

Key Word in vv 10-14 = STAND (mentioned 4 times)

Watchman Nee wrote a helpful book entitled "Sit, Walk, Stand." The book is based on three great truths communicated in Ephesians. I want you to see them. Ephesians tells us we have 3 great responsibilities if we are to enjoy an abundant Christian life:

Step #1 Sit--Eph 1-3 (see 2:6)

Step #2 Walk--Eph 4-6:9 (see 4:1)

Step #3 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.

"Stand"--The greek verb stand with the following preposition "against" really 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 already defeated the Evil One. At His First Coming.

Key: Miracles in the Gospel--purpose? To show us the Power of Christ over the evil effects of sin. Jesus invaded Enemy territory, and won!

Illust: Lk 8:26ff Jesus cast demons out of the man at Gerasa

v 27 a certain man who had demons. . . in the tombs

v 28 when he saw Jesus he cried, Son of God, most High. . .

v 29 for He COMMANDED the spirit to come out
When Jesus cast out demons, He delivered His people from the devil's army.
Col 2:14-15 "the cross. . . spoiled principalities"
Heb 2:14-15 "that He might destroy Him that had the power of death. . ."

Jesus already defeated the Evil One, at His first Coming. Furthermore, He's already announced what He's going to do to the Evil One at His Second Coming.

Mt 25:41 "Then shall He say, Depart from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Jude 6 "He hath reserved in everlasting chains until the Judgment. . ."

Rev 20:10 "And the devil. . . cast into the lake of fire. . ."

Listen. 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 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 Eph 6 are purely defensive.

What's the difference between defensive warfare and offensive warfare?

In a defensive battle, we've already won the 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.

Listen. We do not fight for victory, but from victory.

Rom 8:37 "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Don't miss that. In Christ we are ALREADY conquerors.

Sing: I Jn 4:4 "Greater is He that is in thee"

Illust:

Tran: How can we survive? Depend. Detect. And a third responsibility.

III. Defend (13)

6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

For the second time, Paul urges us to dress in the armor of God. 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.

Illust: Acts 19:13-17 Unsaved Jews tried to cast out demons. . .

Reminder--Q: What is our battle assignment? It is to "stand." Defend.

Quote: BKC--"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."

Illust: (MacArthur) 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? V 18 "Praying. . ."

What is our third responsibility? Defend. Stand.

"withstand"/"stand" = take a stance against; when?

"in the evil day"--When is that? Right now! The interum period.

Paul knew firsthand about wrestling with evil forces.

Illust: Acts 19:21-41 During Paul's ministry at Ephesus, a riot took place. Paul 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.

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

It's tragic to see churches that are not standing. . .

Illust: Church in Wapakoneta--Gary Bragg

Conclusion:

Q: How can you survive?

A: We mustn't assume anything now. This is a life and death answer. If you want to survive, you need to be sure of this. You must be in Christ, first of all. Are you? That's mandatory.

Then you have 3 responsibilities--Depend (on the Lord and His power). Detect (the armor of God, and the attack of the Devil). And Defend (be on guard, constantly).

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