

Eph Ch 6 Vs 13-24

Engaging the Enemy/Standing firm

As we draw near to the close of this letter Paul has spoken to us concerning the spiritual *wealth* of the believer in Christ Jesus, the *walk* of the believer, the life that corresponds to the utilization of those heavenly resources and now we're dealing with the *warfare* of the believer. and So Paul issues to us an exhortation to be strong in the Lord and in the Power of His might.

Don't try to stand on your own, don't try and use the conventional methods of your own human wisdom and reasoning to wage war and stand firm against your enemy, but rather utilize that which is proper and fitting to engage your opponent, the whole armor of God. That's the *only* way that you or I am going to be able to stand, with stand, and stand against our adversary, because we don't wrestle against flesh and blood but (notice with me vs12). It may symptomatically manifest itself in the here and now in human relations at times, but those manifestations are merely a symptom of a much deeper issue that's taking place in the unseen realm of the spirit. 2 Cor 10:3-5 says, "*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.*"

The Lord through Paul the apostle wants us to recognize that and not be ignorant of his devices. Why, so that we might wage wise and effective warfare, but in order for you to wage effective war, you need properly equipped. Last week we took the time to examine the enemy. and I believe that's necessary, to know who it is you're up against and his plottings and tactics, but even if you know everything about your enemy and don't have the necessary defense mechanisms or offensive warfare it's all for not. You can see the enemy coming, you just can't do anything about it, and so you're left paralyzed with fear and unable to do anything except lie there defenseless and at the enemy's mercy, of which he has none. and So as the roaring lion approaches you, with out the proper knowledge and equipment you *will* be devoured. That's basically the Israelites found themselves up against as everyday this intimidating, colossal, gargantuan man by the name of Goliath who stood roughly 9 ½ feet tall. (Turn back to 1st Samuel ch 17 begin at vs3) Now Saul had his troops on 1 Mt and the Philistines were on the other and we read beginning in vs 3.

Vs5

Which would be about 125lbs. (continue) Vs 6-7 So the spearhead alone weighed about 15lbs the entire spear probably around 30 (Read through vs11)

Vs 8-11

In other words they were confronted by the enemy who was seeking to engage them in warfare and they were paralyzed in fear, Vs16 tells that this went on twice a day for 40 days, they were being taunted and mocked and humiliated by the enemy and none of them were prepared to stand against him. Now David has been sent by his dad to make a delivery to his brothers who are in the Israeli army and when he got there he heard Goliath mocking Israel. and You know the story; he basically rebuked the men for not trusting in the Lord and volunteered to take him out personally. Look at vs 31

Vs31-39

In other words, take these things back, there's no way that I can maneuver properly in God's war in the conventional coverings or defense mechanisms of human wisdom. I'm not going to trust in that which man can do for me, but in the living God. and Off David went to confront the enemy, notice vs 42-51 David was victorious that day for 2 reasons, #1 he set aside the conventional armament, which is to say that he didn't trust in the strength of the flesh and abide under the protective covering of man.

and #2 He chose the dress and weaponry that was suitable to battle the enemy that he had. and That's the lesson that's presented to us in Eph Ch 6, don't try to be strong in your own might and your own fortitude or the enemy will eat you up every time.

Trust in the Lord; be strong in the Lord and in the power of *His* might and 2^{ndly} put on the proper protective garments that are suitable to engage in the battle of your enemy. and So as Paul is setting there chained to this Roman soldier, speaking in this letter to the Ephesians about the realities of warfare, I don't know maybe he paused for a moment and was looking at the soldier to whom he was chained. and The Holy Spirit began to speak to Paul regarding the armor, not of this soldier, but of God and uses this soldiers armor as a blueprint, or a vehicle for teaching us what the necessary equippings of God are in order to be victorious in the warfare that we fight. Because the idea behind the word "wrestle" in vs 12 is just that, it speaks of something that's right in your face, not some far off thing that is sort of irrelevant but we get the ripple effects every now and then, but it carries the idea of hand to hand combat.

Vs13-14

Did you notice what the overbearing emphasis was in those vs, "stand" that's what God wants you to do in relation to your enemy, stand your ground. He doesn't tell you to pursue the enemy, He doesn't tell you to go looking for the fight. You know these types of gatherings where the preacher comes out and he starts getting the crowd all riled up and the drums roll and the organ gets to going and he says things like, "oh, the devil's in trouble tonight", or "oh, we're going to get the devil on the run tonight", and he starts telling you all about the devil and the devil becomes the focus, but listen that's not the focus of the word of God.

How much do you read here concerning the devil, the devil isn't the focus, there's the acknowledgement of the enemy and then bam! The focus switches to the strength of God and victory in Christ, you don't have to go looking for the fight, if you're leading a life that's upright, and blameless a life of integrity that accords with the word of God, don't worry the fight will find you. You're called to stand against it, not go looking for it. the emotional well being of the enemy is irrelevant, whether he's mad, glad, happy or sad, on the run or whatever isn't even the point. All we need to know is has the battle been won and is there a way to stand in that victory, and that's what God's word is addressing right here, the victory was taken at the cross and here's how you stand in it. Vs 13 by taking up the *whole* armor of God, don't neglect any of it, because if you do, you can be sure that that's where the attack is going to come and you and I have no ability with in ourselves to with stand *or* stand against the enemy, you are no match for Satan and his cohorts.

Remember what Jesus said, "*with out Me, you can do nothing.*" The words "with stand" and "stand" aren't simply a reiteration of the same thing, the word "with stand" carries the idea of opposing the enemy and winning the actual fight, if someone comes against you and you with stand them, you didn't retreat but rather when it was all said and done they did, you "with stood" your opponent. The word "stand" speaks of your position after the battle has taken place, the fact that you've maintained and are continuing to maintain your ground, your position. It's the result of the conflict; you're standing, and when are you to with stand the enemy and stand your ground? In the evil day, which is to say any day that the enemy engages you in warfare, when you're in the throws of the battle, you're in the evil day, it might be everyday, but as the enemy comes against you, you're to with stand him, and after the conflict is over, you're to be the one who has remained standing. Well how is it that you're to stand, how is it that you can be prepared for the battle to be an immovable force?

Vs14

Stand therefore, in light if the instruction to stand, this is how I want you poised, or ready for your adversary, this is how you're to stand your post. "*Having girded your waist with truth*" in other words make sure that you put on the belt of truth, the belt goes all the way around you and it's central to your being,

In regards to the Romans armor it's absolutely essential because it secured every other piece of armament. with out the belt, nothing else mattered because it couldn't be fastened properly to them, nor were their garments able to be pulled up so that they could move quickly and with precision. Because as you know they would wear these toga's or basically they were a sheet with a hole cut in it for the head and sleeves and they went pretty much down to the ground.

So when they would prepare for war, (so that they could move with out restraint) they would pull up this garment so high and the excess material would be cinched up by the belt. It freed them up to be uninhibited so that they wouldn't stumble, how many people are stumbling because they're not walking in the truth. They're bound and not *freed up*, Jesus said you shall know the truth and the truth will make you *free*, and the one the Son sets free will be free indeed.

He said "*I am the way the truth and the life*" gird yourself with the truth, the belt would hold the armor in its place, it would fasten the sword and daggers to the soldier, when Jesus was praying in John ch 17 for the sanctification of those who would follow Him, He said, "*sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth.*" If you know the truth, if you walk not only positionally but also practically in the truth, in the light of the word of God, you'll recognize the lie. Jesus said that Satan was a liar and the Father of them, that includes any and all form of deception, but if you're girded in the truth, if truth is central to who you are, then you won't fall prey to the tactical maneuverings of lies and deceit of the enemy. You'll see it coming, place your trust in the Lord and bam! Up comes the shield and the fiery dart is quenched, "get thee behind me Satan in the name of Jesus, for you are an offense to me." and Put on the breast plate of righteousness, the breast plate was that which guarded your vital organs, primarily your heart.

You are to be guarded by righteousness, now this isn't really speaking of the righteousness that's imputed to you upon salvation, though surely we could make application to the necessity of that. Speaking again of the righteous covering of Jesus Christ 2 Cor 5:21 "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" and with out that righteous covering we don't make it into the kingdom of God, however we're speaking now to already saved people, so the primary application of what this is in regards to isn't imputed righteousness, but rather imparted righteousness, we're speaking here about integrity.

We're talking about works of righteousness, or right living before our fellow man, now understand that I'm not in regards to works based righteousness in the respect of you becoming righteous by some work that you do. No, Isaiah tells us that our righteousness before the Lord is as filthy rags, the bible says that there are none who are righteous, no not even one. We're covered in the righteousness of Jesus Christ but again we're to walk in that not only positionally but also practically, that's what the whole last ½ of this book is dedicated to, practical righteousness lived out by drawing upon the heavenly resources that are yours in Christ. Remember that Satan is the accuser of the brethren, so when the accusations fly, if you're leading a life of integrity, those arrows are just going to fall to the ground. How are you to stand against the arrows of accusation, by walking uprightly, in integrity, and blamelessness, put on the breastplate of righteousness, guard your heart against works of the flesh, by allowing God to do righteous works through you.

Vs15

Now again we can make a couple of different applications here, but the one that's primarily in focus is peace *with* God and the peace *of* God in the believer's life. No doubt we want to be prepared in season and out of season to give a reason for the hope that lies within us. To share the Gospel of peace with a hurt and dying people, how that they are at enmity with God but through Jesus Christ they can have peace with God as it says in Rom 10:15 "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!*"

But again remember that the context is in reference to you personally as a Christian standing in the warfare that you're confronted with. and Even as the belt is central, the shoes are foundational, this is what's at the bottom of it all, what keeps you planted, knowing that you're at peace with God, which in turn gives you the peace of God. Knowing that He's not against you but for you, and that if He be for you, who can be against you and in that you have peace. Jesus said, "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you.*" He gives us His personal peace, Eph 2:14 takes it even 1 step farther and says that He Himself is our peace, this the assurance that Paul was speaking of when he said in Phil 4:6-7 "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" and Again Col 3:15, "*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body.*"

So being rooted in the peace of God will cause you to stand firm against the onslaught of the enemy, no matter how much he may seek to persuade you or convince you that God is mad at you or you don't deserve His love and forgiveness. You've been reconciled to God by the blood of Christ and in that you have peace, but if you don't have that peace, that peace that causes you to sleep like a baby in the midst of the raging storm, like the Lord did in the bottom of the boat when the disciples were all freaking out, then you're going to trip and stumble. So you're to have your feet shod with the preparation or preparedness in other words the condition of your feet spiritually speaking, that which causes you to stand sure footed and stable in the fight is the good news that you're at peace with God, and that brings you the peace of God. You see you stand in that, no one is able to snatch you out of His hand, but.

Vs 16

There were generally 2 different shields that the Roman soldier would be outfitted with. A small round one that would be strapped to his forearm to deflect the sword of the enemy in close hand-to-hand combat. and Then there was a much bigger shield that was about 4' tall by about 2-2½ feet wide, and this is the shield that Paul has in view here. Because as the enemy would prepare for battle many times what they would do would be to line up hundreds or possibly thousands of archers.

They would dip the tips of them in pitch and before they began to really advance they would simultaneously launch all these arrows into the opposing troops. and So you would have literally hundreds and hundreds of flaming arrows hurling at you and they would be so dense that if there was any part of you that was exposed out from under the covering of this shield you were going to be hit. They would all line up and form a huge wall interlocking these shields and then the row behind them would set their shield on the others kind of leaning back just making this massive barricade so as to quench these arrows and hold there ground with out casualties.

This is the picture that Paul is painting, it's no the scene of an occasional arrow here and there, but rather a seemingly endless barrage of non-stop oppression where by if you lower your shield for even a minute, it's all over, you're a dead man or a dead woman. What's the shield? Faith, you have to trust in God and His word above and beyond all else because if you subject the Lord or His word to doubt, it's all over. You lose. God is an anchor for you, His word is your anchor and when you're subjected to doubt or temptation if you aren't anchored to the word of God then you're going to get hurt and it'll only be by the grace of God if the wound's not mortal.

Asaph said, "surely the Lord is good", now you have to trust that, because so many times things come up in life that will tempt you to question that. Because something has happened in my life that I don't understand and if God was good why would He allow this to happen, I don't understand. Now I do understand that God is good, but I don't understand this, so I can never give up that which I do understand for that which I don't understand. I have to trust God, I know that He has my eternal best interest in mind Jer 29:12 *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

Now do you believe that or not, are you going to place your trust in the word of God thereby raising your shield of faith, or are you going to expose yourself to full frontal assault by your enemy. Ps 3:3 *"But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head."* One more, Prov 30:5 *"Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."* It's not an exaggeration to say that as a believer you will be subjected to literally thousands of the fiery darts of temptations, strategies, and deceptions, but the victory through it all is faith, faith in the Lord Jesus and in His word. For the just, (the bible says) those who are justified in the sight of God, those who are looked upon by God just as though they'd never sinned at all, are those who live by faith, for the just shall live by faith. Anything that isn't from faith is sin. (Rom 14:23) The apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:4-5 *"And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"*

Peter also mentions the role of faith in spiritual warfare in 1 Peter 5:8-9 when he said, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, (how) steadfast in the faith.”*

Vs17

1 Thess 5:8 says, *“But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope (which in the biblical sense is an assured expectation) of salvation.”* So the helmet of salvation represents the assurance of your salvation. Do you know that if you were to walk out these doors and be struck by another vehicle thereby meeting your Maker that you would be welcomed into His presence, or is there an underlying fear that you may hear, depart from Me, I never knew you.

If you're not assured of your salvation, and you consider yourself a Christian then you don't have your helmet on, and anyone in a war with out a helmet is in a detrimental position. Peter said, *“therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.”* Because two of the most dangerous edges of the enemies sword is that of discouragement and doubt, and he seeks to subject you to these things by pointing to your failures, or your sins and unresolved problems, maybe through your terminal disease or poor health. You begin to get discouraged, and through that doubt begins to settle in, you've removed your helmet and availed yourself to a fatal blow.

God allowed Satan to strip Job of virtually every good thing he possessed except his life and yet through it all Job declared of God, *“though He may slay me, yet will I trust Him.”* Job was assured of God's love for Him, the helmet of salvation, the assurance of salvation, can you lose your salvation? Not as long as you abide in Christ, in Christ you're eternally secure, He will never leave you nor forsake you, but you take your helmet off, through sin walk away from Him, I believe you can. In the book of Rev ch 3 Jesus spoke of blotting some of the believers names out of the book of Life if they didn't repent. The bible says that if your name isn't found written in the book of Life you'll be cast into the lake of Fire, now if they're name was blotted out, then at one point it had to be there, which means that they were at one time abiding in Christ.

Jesus said that you and I have to abide in Him, if you abide in Christ you can have the assurance of salvation, but if you separate yourself from the Lord and only God knows the breaking point, but I just recommend not testing the waters. You just see how close to Jesus Christ you can get, keep your helmet on. and The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, this is the only piece of armament that you have that is not only defensive but offensive as well. and Of course at this point we think of Heb 4:12 *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* The word of God pierces the heart, and the sword that's mentioned here isn't a large sword but rather a small sword or like a large dagger that's meant for an up close, specifically targeted thrust. This type of sword wasn't just flailed madly, but was pointed specifically.

The Christian who doesn't know the word of God well, can't use it well, consider Jesus as the prime example of the master swordsman, He knew the word (and rightly so, He was the living word, He wrote it) but when the enemy tempted Him in Matt ch 4 during His time of fasting in the desert, He overcame by pointed thrusts of precision with the word of God. (Let's look quickly at Matt ch 4)

Vs1-11

Notice that with every confrontation Jesus didn't seek to debate the enemy but simply targeted the enemy with the written word of God and through that was victorious. So if you don't know the word, you're not in a good position to wage effective warfare, if you just count on the experience of salvation and what you *feel* like is ok to get you through, you are going to be radically vulnerable to all sorts of spiritual danger.

One commentator said in regards to Christians who rely on their feelings that they "get into countless compromising situations and fall prey to innumerable false ideas and practices, simply because they are ignorant of the specific teachings of Scripture." The word that's translated "word" here in Ch 6Vs 17 is not the Greek word "logos". But rather the word "rhema" which is in regards to individual words or specific statements, in other words the sword isn't wielded by general understanding of basic biblical principals. But rather again the precision that comes by the knowledge and understanding of specific truths.

Like Jesus in the wilderness, we need to use specific scriptural truths to counter specific satanic falsehoods and deceit. That's why Paul told Timothy to 2 "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" You're tempted to engage physically with someone outside of marriage and the enemy begins to rationalize with you, "how could something that seems so right be so wrong." Take out your sword, it is written, "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God*" 1 Thess 4:3-5 and Again, "*For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.*" 1 Thess 4:7-8 You see you're to wield the sword of the Spirit with precision.

Vs18

We don't have time to exhaust this vs but the Christian soldier can not stand until 1st he's been on his knees, it's been said that the man who moves forward on his knees never need retreat. and So many times prayer is the deciding factor in the battle, and I don't believe that it's coincidence that prayer is the 7th item in the Christians armament, 7 being the biblical number of completion. and Apart from prayer, you are incomplete in your readiness for war, as a matter of fact you aren't ready at all. You might say that the effectiveness of the *armor of God* "goes into action" through *all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*; in other words our prayers are to be directed by the Spirit. and We exercise *truth, righteousness, the preparation of the gospel, faith, salvation* and *the word of God* in and through prayer. Not only for ourselves but notice the need for intercession, standing in the gap on the behalf of all of your brothers and sisters. and Don't lose heart in your praying but rather endure, "with all perseverance".

Vs19-24