

Ephesians

Lesson Eighteen Warfare in the Church

6:10-20

Introduction:

1. The first part of the book of Ephesians detailed the essential nature of the church – the body of Christ.
2. Following that, Paul began to make application of that central truth.
3. If the church is essential, the Christian must live in a way that maintains fellowship in and magnifies the church.
4. This means the child of God must conduct himself appropriately in relationships with others – in the church, in the home, and in the community.
5. Finally, the Christian must fight against all things that would seek to lure him away from the Lord's church.

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

- A. The word “finally” indicates two ideas.
 1. First, Paul was coming to the end of the epistle and these teachings served as a fitting conclusion.
 2. Also, the Greek word for ‘finally’ also means, “Hereafter, henceforth; for the future.”
 3. Thus, these instructions would benefit them in their future lives as children of God.
- B. The statement of this verse is in the form of a command.
 1. ‘Strong’ means, “Empowered, endued with strength” (cf. Rom. 4:20; 2 Tim. 2:1; Acts 9:22; Phil. 4:13).
 2. ‘Power’ means, “Vigor, strength dominion, or force.”
 3. ‘Might’ means, “Forcefulness, ability, or strength” (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11).
- C. To remain empowered with the vigor of the Lord's strength, one must remain in fellowship with Him.
 1. Thus, to “be strong in the Lord” means to be empowered in the church!
 2. The church is an army over which Jesus is captain (Heb. 2:10; 12:2; Acts 3:15; 5:31).
 - a. He lived as a soldier engaged in a spiritual battle.
 - b. He fought Satan and demons, confronted sin in His disciples, battled the Jewish sects, and warred against error and for truth.
 3. Each Christian is a volunteer soldier in the Lord's army (2 Tim. 2:1-4; Phil. 2:25; Phm. 1:2; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).
 4. If one leaves the church, he becomes AWOL – separated from his source of strength and salvation.
 5. To be a faithful soldier in the Lord's army, one must engage the enemy and fight the good fight of faith.
- D. The Christian's strength is in and comes from the Lord; for, He has already fought and defeated the enemies of man – temptation, sin, Satan, and death.

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

- A. To prepare one's self for the battle of daily Christian life, one must put on the whole armor of God.
- B. Like the previous verse, this is also a command.
 - 1. It must be obeyed actively and with purpose.
 - 2. God does not treat us like infants, clothing us every day.
 - 3. However, He does make sure that what we need is available.
- C. The devil is the enemy of the Christian – and he must be resisted (Jam. 4:7-10).
 - 1. The word 'devil' means, "Slanderer or false accuser" (cf. Matt. 4:1; Job).
 - 2. It refers to a person who lies about another to cause harm to that person, his character, or his relationships.
 - 3. This is one of about 15 names that are given to the devil in scripture.
 - 4. Each describes his nature and/or his methods of attacking God's people.
- D. Thankfully, God reveals to the Christian exactly how the devil will work and what methods he will use to attack.
 - 1. Satan is not God, nor is he a god.
 - 2. His power is limited – he is not eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent.
 - 3. His motivation is hatred (Job 1:8-11; 1 John 5:19; 2:15-17; 2 Cor. 4:4).
 - 4. His mission is destruction (Job 1:13-19; John 8:44).
 - 5. His method is deception (Job 1:21; 2 Cor. 11:3, 14).
- E. The Greek word for "wiles" is *methodeia* (μεθοδεια), from which we get the word "method."
 - 1. This word means, "Travel with; thus, to use cunning arts; deceits, trickery."
 - 2. The idea of this word is an elaborate planning using deception.
- F. Satan's plan is to trick man using elaborate deception.
 - 1. He is a liar and the father of deception (John 8:44).
 - 2. He seeks to deceive man as he deceived himself (Eze. 28:2, 15-17; cf. Rom. 12:3).
 - 3. He lies about God (Genesis 3:1-6).
 - 4. He lies about man (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5).
 - 5. He lies about truth (Matthew 4:1-11).
 - 6. He lies about sin.
 - a. He is a glamorizer (Heb. 11:24; 1 Cor. 7:1-2).
 - b. He is a minimizer (Isa. 59:1-2; John 10:10; Gal. 6:7-8).
 - c. He is a compromiser (1 Sam. 15:16ff; Gal. 1:6-9).
 - d. He is a rationalizer (2 Cor. 10:12).
 - e. He is a paralyzer (1 Cor. 6:12; 2 Pet. 2:14; 1 John 4:18).
 - 7. Satan cannot be trusted!
- G. Also, Satan uses other tricks to turn one against God.
 - 1. Destruction – *He wants us to blame God for his evil works (cf. Job).*
 - 2. Distraction – *He wants us to lose focus on our true purpose.*
 - 3. Discouragement – *He wants us to lose hope and give up.*
 - 4. Doubt – *He wants us to lose faith and trust in God.*
 - 5. Death – *He wants us to fear what is beyond this life.*
- H. Knowing how Satan will attack and wearing the protection of the armor of God, the Christian can stand against the wiles of the devil!

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

- A. The battle that the Christian faces is described as wrestling.
 - 1. This word comes from a root that means, "To throw."
 - 2. Thus, it means, "To struggle to throw another to the ground."
 - 3. Our fight is a face-to-face battle with spiritual evil.
- B. Even though we live in the flesh, our fight is not a physical one.
 - 1. The weapons of a Christian are not physical ones (2 Cor. 10:1-6).
 - 2. Instead, they are divinely powered for the purpose of demolishing fortresses.
 - a. A physical illustration – Jericho (Joshua 6:20; Hebrews 11:30)
 - b. A spiritual illustration – Jeremiah 1:9-10
 - 3. Satan's stronghold is in the hearts and minds of men (Rev. 2:9, 10, 13, 24; 3:9; 2 Cor. 4:3-4).
 - 4. Thus, our fight is to destroy the worldly reasoning of men and every barrier raised against the knowledge of God (Psa. 2; Acts 4:24-31; 2 Tim. 3:1-7).
 - 5. We are to lead away captive every thought or purpose in submission to Christ (cf. Luke 21:24; 1 Cor. 10:20-21; Matt. 16:23; John 6:70).
- C. This does not mean that the Christian will not have physical enemies, but that the battle is against forces greater than man.
 - 1. **Principalities** – "Beginning, of first rank." (Satan and those evil spirits who have authority over others [1:21; 2:2; 3:10; Rom. 8:38; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6].)
 - 2. **Powers** – "Force, authority, rule." (Evil spirits with influence and rule.)
 - 3. **Rulers** – Literally, "A world ruler; lord of this world." (Another reference to Satan and his evil, demonic forces.)
 - 4. **World** – Literally, "Age; period of time."
 - 5. Ultimately, our fight is against wickedness in the spiritual realm.
- D. We fight this spiritual battle in a physical realm; however, we must never lose focus on the dual nature of our world and our lives.

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

- A. To engage in and win this battle, we must put on the whole armor of God.
 - 1. The Greek word for "whole armor" is sometimes transliterated into English as panoply.
 - 2. God has provided every tool for our defense and weapon for our advance.
 - 3. Yet, we must take up the armor, put it on, and engage the enemy.
- B. To withstand means, "To stand against, to set one's self against; to resist or oppose" (cf. 1 Peter 5:8-9; Matthew 5:39).
- C. Whenever the devil attacks, it is an evil day (cf. 5:16).
- D. Whenever the devil attack, we must do all that is necessary to resist and overcome.
 - 1. This requires the whole armor of God.
 - 2. This requires defense and attack.
 - 3. This requires exercise and discipline.
- E. After fighting the enemy, when the contest is over, make sure that you are the one who is still standing – victorious!

6:14-17 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

- A. We will be able to stand victorious because of the armor of God.
- B. THE GIRDLE OF TRUTH
 - 1. The loins (or, waist) had to be protected to guard the internal organs – the seat of power (cf. 1 Pet. 1:13; Deut. 33:11).
 - 2. The Roman soldier wore a wide band of leather (sometimes with attached metal) to which other parts of armor would be joined.
 - 3. The Christian guards himself with the Truth of God's Word (John 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 13:52; 1 Pet. 4:11; Acts 17:11).
 - 4. This truth is manifest in our lives by honesty and integrity – toward God and one another.
- C. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
 - 1. The breastplate was designed to protect the soldier from the neck to the thighs, also on the back and sides (usually made of leather or bronze).
 - 2. It was called a "heart protector" – guarding the vital organs, including the heart and lungs.
 - 3. The Christian guards himself with righteousness – justification from sin.
 - 4. This righteousness manifests in our lives by right living in submission to God (1 John 3:7; John 8:46; 14:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rev. 12:10).
- D. THE SANDALS OF PREPARATION IN THE GOSPEL
 - 1. Sandals provided sure footing and a firm foundation from which to fight.
 - 2. The sandals of a soldier were bound onto the foot and to the bottoms were attached spikes or nails (like modern day cleats).
 - 3. The Christian stands on the firm foundation of preparation in Truth.
 - 4. This preparation manifests itself in readiness to obey, stand upon, and defend the Gospel of Christ (Ezra 7:10; Phil. 1:17; Jude 3; Rom. 1:14-15).
- E. THE SHIELD OF FAITH
 - 1. The Roman shield was "a large, door shaped shield; a large, oblong, four cornered shield." {4 feet tall by 2 ½ feet wide}
 - 2. It was made of iron, overlaid with two layers of wood, wrapped in linen, and covered in leather.
 - 3. The Christian guards himself from the devil's flaming arrows with the faith – the Word of God (Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; Rom. 1:5; Col. 1:23, 27; etc.).
 - 4. This faith manifests itself in our lives as complete and absolute trust in God (Psa. 3:3; 5:12; 28:7; 84:9-11; Rom. 8:28ff; etc.).
- F. THE HELMET OF SALVATION
 - 1. The helmet served to protect the head from the blows of the enemy.
 - 2. The Roman soldier's helmet was made of leather and bronze.
 - 3. The Christian guards his mind with salvation – the forgiveness of sins.
 - 4. This salvation manifests itself in our lives as we find and follow the "way of escape" (1 Cor. 10:12-14; Acts 8:22-24; 1 John 1:9; Jam. 5:16).
- G. THE SWORD OF TRUTH
 - 1. The Roman soldier carried a light, short sword about two feet in length.
 - 2. It was a personal weapon used for hand-to-hand combat.
 - 3. The Christian defends and attacks with the Spirit-inspired Word of God (Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16; 2 Tim. 2:15; etc.).

4. Analysis of our weapon:
 - a. It is a sword – double-edged, powerful, and dangerous (Heb. 4:12-13; Rev. 1:16; Acts 2:37; 5:33; Jam. 1:23-25; 2 Tim. 2:15).
 - b. It is the sword of the Spirit – authored and authorized by God (Acts 3:12; Rom. 1:16; Titus 2:15; Matt. 28:20; Acts 20:20, 27; etc.).
 - c. It is the Word of God – specifically applied to each situation (Matt. 13:51-52; Mark 4:33; Acts 2:5, 16, 37-38; 16:30-32; etc.).
5. To defend and advance on the battlefield, the Christian must learn and know the Word of Truth.

6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints

- A. Prayer is also a part of the Christian armor.
- B. Like the sword of the Spirit, prayer is both an offensive and defensive tool.
- C. The basics of prayer:
 1. Directed to the Father by the authority of the Son (John 16:23)
 2. Preceded and followed by obedience (1 Pet. 3:12)
 3. Offered in faith (James 1:5-6; Matt. 21:22)
 4. Offered with reverence (Psalm 89:7; 111:9)
 5. Composed of four parts:
 - a. **A** - Adoration
 - b. **C** - Confession
 - c. **T** - Thanksgiving
 - d. **S** - Supplication (including Intercession)
- D. There is a connection between the battle and prayer (Mark 9:28-29).
- E. Our prayers must include **persistent petition** (Acts 3:1; 1 Thes. 5:17; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; Matt. 14:23).
 1. Literally, Paul wrote: “Praying through all times (or, occasions).”
 2. The ASV reads: “With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit.”
 3. We must be people who constantly and consistently pray.
 4. This involves perseverance – “watch and pray.”
 5. Prayer is hard work that requires diligent effort.
 6. Yet, on the battlefield, prayer is our connection to our Commander.
- F. Our prayers must include **specific supplication** (Heb. 5:7; Phil. 4:6; Luke 22:31-32; 2 Tim. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:11; 9:14; Jam. 5:16).
 1. Supplication is a request made due to one’s deep need.
 2. We must make personal supplications – pray for our own needs.
 3. However, we also must make supplications on behalf of others.
 4. These supplications are to be **strong, specific, and spiritual**.
- G. In the battle against Satan and sin, the Christian must not neglect prayer.

6:19-20 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak

- A. Paul requested that his brethren specifically pray for him.
 1. Paul was engaging the enemy on the battlefield.
 2. Thus, like all other Christians, he desired the prayers of others on his behalf.

- B. Paul's request centered on his desire to preach and proclaim the Gospel.
 - 1. He prayed that words would be given to him that he might continue to preach.
 - 2. He prayed that he might open his mouth in freedom of speech – frankness, fearlessness, and simplicity.
 - 3. He prayed that he would be able to make known to others the revelation of the mystery of the Gospel.
- C. Paul's desire and request should be the same for every Christian!
- D. He prayed for this boldness even while being imprisoned for his preaching.
 - 1. Paul had been bound by chains because he preached the Gospel.
 - 2. Yet, he prayed for boldness to continue preaching the Gospel!
 - 3. In fact, he asked for others to pray for him that he might continue to be bold and frank in proclaiming God's truth.
- E. Notice that this was something that Paul "ought" to do – it was necessary because it was a moral obligation.
- F. In fact, it is what all Christians "ought" to do!
- G. Consider the idea of Paul as an ambassador for Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:20).
 - 1. An ambassador is one sent with the authority of another.
 - 2. As an apostle, Paul spoke and preached with the authority of Christ.
 - 3. To embarrass, harm, arrest, or put to death the ambassador of another nation was an insult that often led to war.
 - 4. Yet, an ambassador of Heaven is in chains for preaching the Gospel of peace and salvation to a lost and dying world.
 - 5. Instead of praying for his release from chains, Paul simply sought to be able to carry out his mission – to deliver the message of his Master.
 - 6. While we are not ambassadors as Paul was, we must share his desire to declare the Gospel to the world – no matter the suffering to be endured.
- H. If we want to be victorious on the battlefield, we must put on and use all aspects of the Christian armor.